I am a heritage because I bring you years of thought and the lore of time — I impart yet I can not speak — I have traveled among the peoples of the earth — I am a rover — Oft-times I stray from the fireside of the one who loves and cherishes me - who misses me when I am gone — Should you find me vagrant please send me home - among my brothers - on the book shelves of .....

ALFRED SANTELL

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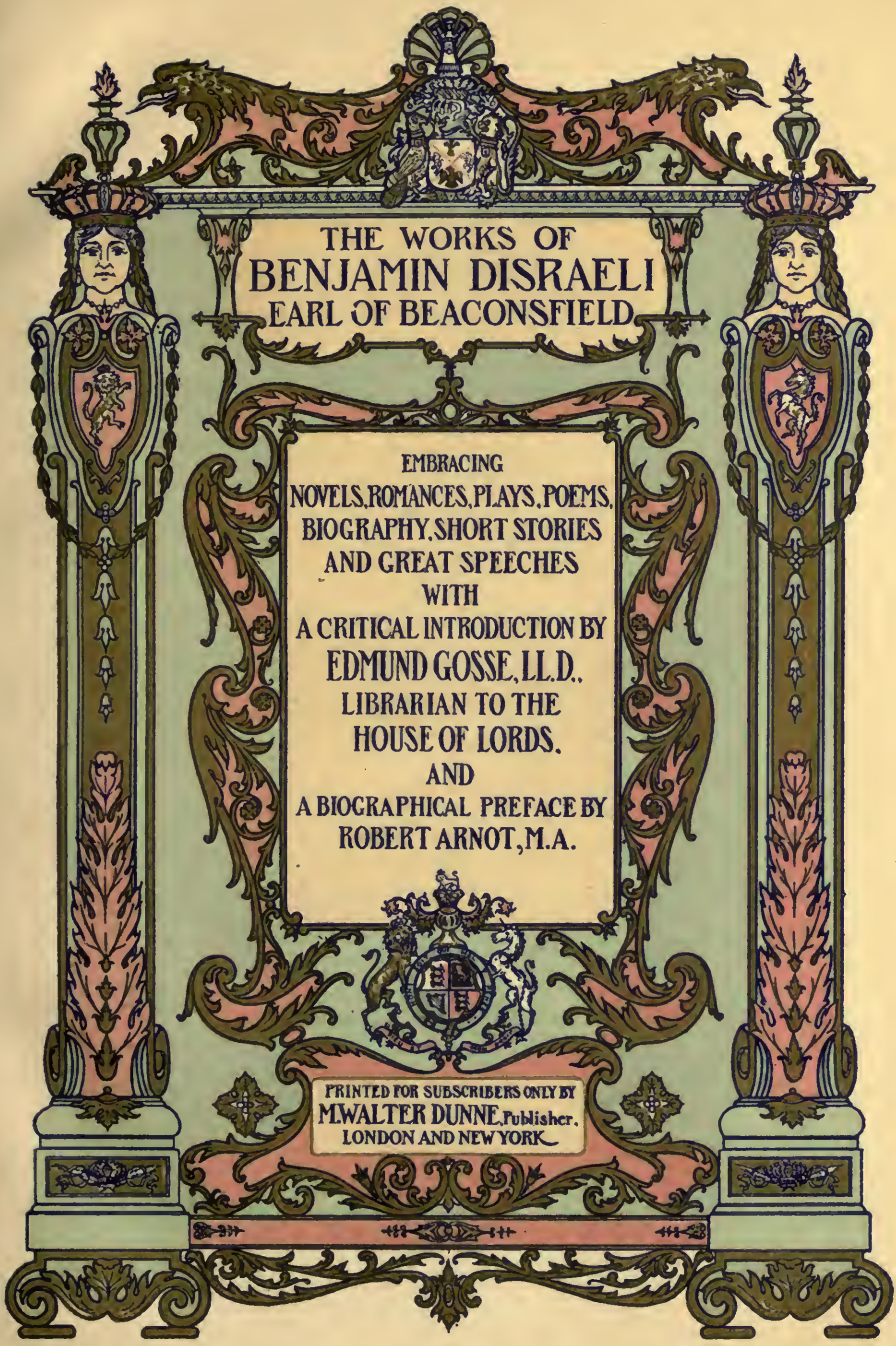
THE WORKS OF
BENJAMIN DISRAELI
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD
EMBRACING
NOVELS, ROMANCES, PLAYS, POEMS,
BIOGRAPHY, SHORT STORIES
AND GREAT SPEECHES
WITH
A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION BY
EDMUND GOSSE, LL.D.,
LIBRARIAN TO THE
HOUSE OF LORDS.
AND
A BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE BY
ROBERT ARNOT, M.A.
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CONINGSBY

OR

THE NEW GENERATION

BY

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY HERMAN ROUNTREE

The lady resting on his arm was Edith.

(See page 122, *Coningsby*.)

VOLUME II.

M. WALTER DUNNE

NEW YORK AND LONDON

CONINGSBY

OR

THE NEW GENERATION

BY

BENJAMIN DISRAELI
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

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THE LADY RESTING ON HIS ARM WAS EDITH. *Frontispiece*
(See page 122, *Coningsby.*)

YOUNG GULLIVER AND THE BROBDINGNAG MINISTER. . 64

(From a cartoon in the London *Punch* in the year 1845. It was at this period that Mr. Disraeli began his attacks upon Sir Robert Peel, which were continued during the lifetime of that statesman. See *Selected Speeches.*)

ON THE DIZZY BRINK 114

Lord B.: Just a little nearer the edge?
Britannia: Not an inch farther. I'm a good deal nearer than is pleasant already.

(From a cartoon in the London *Punch* in the year 1878. See *Selected Speeches.*)

CONINGSBY

(*CONTINUED*)

CHAPTER XLVII.

A Fading Flower.

THE knowledge that Sidonia was in Paris greatly agitated Lady Monmouth. She received the intimation indeed from Coningsby at dinner with sufficient art to conceal her emotion. Lord Monmouth himself was quite pleased at the announcement. Sidonia was his especial favourite; he knew so much, had such an excellent judgment, and was so rich. He had always something to tell you, was the best man in the world to bet on, and never wanted anything. A perfect character, according to the Monmouth ethics.

In the evening of the day that Coningsby met Sidonia, Lady Monmouth made a little visit to the charming Duchess de G——t who was 'at home' every other night in her pretty hotel, with its embroidered white satin draperies, its fine old cabinets, and ancestral portraits of famous name, brave marshals and bright princesses of the olden time, on its walls. These receptions without form, yet full of elegance,

are what English 'at homes' were before the Continental war, though now, by a curious perversion of terms, the easy domestic title distinguishes in England a formally-prepared and elaborately-collected assembly, in which everything and every person are careful to be as little 'homely' as possible. In France, on the contrary, 'tis on these occasions, and in this manner, that society carries on that degree and kind of intercourse which in England we attempt awkwardly to maintain by the medium of that unpopular species of visitation styled a morning call; which all complain that they have either to make or to endure.

Nowhere was this species of reception more happily conducted than at the Duchess de G——t's. The rooms, though small, decorated with taste, brightly illumined; a handsome and gracious hostess, the Duke the very pearl of gentlemen, and sons and daughters worthy of such parents. Every moment some one came in, and some one went away. In your way from a dinner to a ball, you stopped to exchange agreeable *on dits*. It seemed that every woman was pretty, every man a wit. Sure you were to find yourself surrounded by celebrities, and men were welcomed there, if they were clever, before they were famous, which showed it was a house that regarded intellect, and did not seek merely to gratify its vanity by being surrounded by the distinguished.

Enveloped in a rich Indian shawl, and leaning back on a sofa, Lady Monmouth was engaged in conversation with the courtly and classic Count M——é, when, on casually turning her head, she observed entering the saloon, Sidonia. She just caught his form bowing to the Duchess, and instantly

turned her head and replunged into her conversation with increased interest. Lady Monmouth was a person who had the power of seeing all about her, everything and everybody, without appearing to look. She was conscious that Sidonia was approaching her neighbourhood. Her heart beat in tumult; she dreaded to catch the eye of that very individual whom she was so anxious to meet. He was advancing towards the sofa. Instinctively, Lady Monmouth turned from the Count, and began speaking earnestly to her other neighbour, a young daughter of the house, innocent and beautiful, not yet quite fledged, trying her wings in society under the maternal eye. She was surprised by the extreme interest which her grand neighbour suddenly took in all her pursuits, her studies, her daily walks in the Bois de Boulogne. Sidonia, as the Marchioness had anticipated, had now reached the sofa. But no, it was to the Count, and not to Lady Monmouth that he was advancing; and they were immediately engaged in conversation. After some little time, when she had become accustomed to his voice, and found her own heart throbbing with less violence, Lucretia turned again, as if by accident, to the Count, and met the glance of Sidonia. She meant to have received him with haughtiness, but her self-command deserted her; and slightly rising from the sofa, she welcomed him with a countenance of extreme pallor and with some awkwardness.

His manner was such as might have assisted her, even had she been more troubled. It was marked by a degree of respectful friendliness. He expressed without reserve his pleasure at meeting her again; inquired much how she had passed her time since they last parted; asked more than once after the

Marquess. The Count moved away; Sidonia took his seat. His ease and homage combined greatly relieved her. She expressed to him how kind her Lord would consider his society, for the Marquess had suffered in health since Sidonia last saw him. His periodical gout had left him, which made him ill and nervous. The Marquess received his friends at dinner every day. Sidonia, particularly amiable, offered himself as a guest for the following one.

'And do you go to the great ball to-morrow?' inquired Lucretia, delighted with all that had occurred.

'I always go to their balls,' said Sidonia, 'I have promised.'

There was a momentary pause; Lucretia happier than she had been for a long time, her face a little flushed, and truly in a secret tumult of sweet thoughts, remembered she had been long there, and offering her hand to Sidonia, bade him adieu until to-morrow, while he, as was his custom, soon repaired to the refined circle of the Countess de C—s—l—ne, a lady whose manners he always mentioned as his fair ideal, and whose house was his favourite haunt.

Before to-morrow comes, a word or two respecting two other characters of this history connected with the family of Lord Monmouth. And first of Flora. La Petite was neither very well nor very happy. Her hereditary disease developed itself; gradually, but in a manner alarming to those who loved her. She was very delicate, and suffered so much from the weakness of her chest, that she was obliged to relinquish singing. This was really the only tie between her and the Marchioness, who, without being a petty tyrant, treated her often with unfeeling haughtiness.

She was, therefore, now rarely seen in the chambers of the great. In her own apartments she found, indeed, some distraction in music, for which she had a natural predisposition, but this was a pursuit that only fed the morbid passion of her tender soul. Alone, listening only to sweet sounds, or indulging in soft dreams that never could be realised, her existence glided away like a vision, and she seemed to become every day more fair and fragile. Alas! hers was the sad and mystic destiny to love one whom she seldom met, and by whom, if she met him, she would scarcely, perhaps, be recognised. Yet in that passion, fanciful, almost ideal, her life was absorbed; nor for her did the world contain an existence, a thought, a sensation, beyond those that sprang from the image of the noble youth who had sympathised with her in her sorrows, and had softened the hard fortunes of dependence by his generous sensibility. Happy that, with many mortifications, it was still her lot to live under the roof of one who bore his name, and in whose veins flowed the same blood! She felt indeed for the Marquess, whom she so rarely saw, and from whom she had never received much notice, prompted it would seem, by her fantastic passion, a degree of reverence, almost of affection, which seemed occasionally, even to herself, as something inexplicable and without reason.

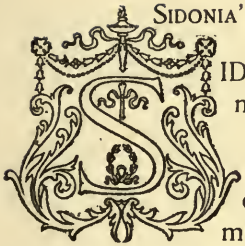
As for her fond step-father, M. Villebecque, the world fared very differently with him. His lively and enterprising genius, his ready and multiform talents, and his temper which defied disturbance, had made their way. He had become the very right hand of Lord Monmouth; his only counsellor, his only confidant; his secret agent; the minister of his will. And

well did Villebecque deserve this trust, and ably did he maintain himself in the difficult position which he achieved. There was nothing which Villebecque did not know, nothing which he could not do, especially at Paris. He was master of his subject; in all things the secret of success, and without which, however they may from accident dazzle the world, the statesman, the orator, the author, all alike feel the damning consciousness of being charlatans.

Coningsby had made a visit to M. Villebecque and Flora the day after his arrival. It was a recollection and a courtesy that evidently greatly gratified them. Villebecque talked very much and amusingly; and Flora, whom Coningsby frequently addressed, very little, though she listened with great earnestness. Coningsby told her that he thought, from all he heard, she was too much alone, and counselled her to gaiety. But nature, that had made her mild, had denied her that constitutional liveliness of being which is the graceful property of French women. She was a lily of the valley, that loved seclusion and the tranquillity of virgin glades. Almost every day, as he passed their *entresol,* Coningsby would look into Villebecque's apartments for a moment, to ask after Flora.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Sidonia's Theories on Woman.



IDONIA was to dine at Lord Monmouth's the day after he met Lucretia, and afterwards they were all to meet at a ball much talked of, and to which invitations were much sought; and which was to be given that evening by the Baroness S. de R——d.

Lord Monmouth's dinners at Paris were celebrated. It was generally agreed that they had no rivals; yet there were others who had as skilful cooks, others who, for such a purpose, were equally profuse in their expenditure. What, then, was the secret spell of his success? The simplest in the world, though no one seemed aware of it. His lordship's plates were always hot: whereas at Paris, in the best appointed houses, and at dinners which, for costly materials and admirable art in their preparation, cannot be surpassed, the effect is always considerably lessened, and by a mode the most mortifying: by the mere circumstance that every one at a French dinner is served on a cold plate. The reason of a custom, or rather a necessity, which one would think a nation so celebrated for their gastronomical taste would recoil from, is really, it is believed, that the ordinary French por-

celain is so very inferior that it cannot endure the preparatory heat for dinner. The common white pottery, for example, which is in general use, and always found at the *cafés,* will not bear vicinage to a brisk kitchen fire for half-an-hour.. Now, if we only had that treaty of commerce with France which has been so often on the point of completion, the fabrics of our unrivalled potteries, in exchange for their capital wines, would be found throughout France. The dinners of both nations would be improved: the English would gain a delightful beverage, and the French, for the first time in their lives, would dine off hot plates. An unanswerable instance of the advantages of commercial reciprocity!

The guests at Lord Monmouth's to-day were chiefly Carlists, individuals bearing illustrious names, that animate the page of history, and are indissolubly bound up with the glorious annals of their great country. They are the phantoms of a past, but real aristocracy; an aristocracy that was founded on an intelligible principle; which claimed great privileges for great purposes; whose hereditary duties were such, that their possessors were perpetually in the eye of the nation, and who maintained, and, in a certain point of view justified, their pre-eminence by constant illustration.

It pleased Lord Monmouth to show great courtesies to a fallen race with whom he sympathised; whose fathers had been his friends in the days of his hot youth; whose mothers he had made love to; whose palaces had been his home; whose brilliant *fêtes* he remembered; whose fanciful splendour excited his early imagination; and whose magnificent and wanton luxury had developed his own predisposition for

boundless enjoyment. Soubise and his suppers; his cutlets and his mistresses; the profuse and embarrassed De Lauragais, who sighed for 'entire ruin,' as for a strange luxury, which perpetually eluded his grasp; these were the heroes of the olden time that Lord Monmouth worshipped; the wisdom of our ancestors which he appreciated; and he turned to their recollection for relief from the vulgar prudence of the degenerate days on which he had fallen: days when nobles must be richer than other men, or they cease to have any distinction.

It was impossible not to be struck by the effective appearance of Lady Monmouth as she received her guests in grand toilet preparatory to the ball; white satin and minever, a brilliant tiara. Her fine form, her costume of a fashion as perfect as its materials were sumptuous, and her presence always commanding and distinguished, produced a general effect to which few could be insensible. It was the triumph of mien over mere beauty of countenance.

The hotel of Madame S. de R——d is not more distinguished by its profuse decoration than by the fine taste which has guided the vast expenditure. Its halls of arabesque are almost without a rival; there is not the slightest embellishment in which the hand and feeling of art are not recognised. The rooms were very crowded; everybody distinguished in Paris was there: the lady of the Court, the duchess of the Faubourg, the wife of the rich financier, the constitutional throne, the old monarchy, the modern bourse, were alike represented. Marshals of the Empire, Ministers of the Crown, Dukes and Marquesses, whose ancestors lounged in the Œil de Bœuf; diplomatists of all countries, eminent foreigners of all nations, depu-

ties who led sections, members of learned and scientific academies, occasionally a stray poet; a sea of sparkling tiaras, brilliant bouquets, glittering stars, and glowing ribbons, many beautiful faces, many famous ones: unquestionably the general air of a first-rate Parisian saloon, on a great occasion, is not easily equalled. In London there is not the variety of guests; nor the same size and splendour of saloons. Our houses are too small for reception.

Coningsby, who had stolen away from his grandfather's before the rest of the guests, was delighted with the novelty of the splendid scene. He had been in Paris long enough to make some acquaintances, and mostly with celebrated personages. In his long fruitless endeavour to enter the saloon in which they danced, he found himself hustled against the illustrious Baron von H——t, whom he had sat next to at dinner a few days before at Count M——é's.

'It is more difficult than cutting through the Isthmus of Panama, Baron,' said Coningsby, alluding to a past conversation.

'Infinitely,' replied M. de H., smiling; 'for I would undertake to cut through the Isthmus, and I cannot engage that I shall enter this ball-room.'

Time, however, brought Coningsby into that brilliant chamber. What a blaze of light and loveliness! How coquettish are the costumes! How vivid the flowers! To sounds of stirring melody, beautiful beings move with grace. Grace, indeed, is beauty in action.

Here, where all are fair and everything is attractive, his eye is suddenly arrested by one object, a form of surpassing grace among the graceful, among the beauteous a countenance of unrivalled beauty.

She was young among the youthful; a face of sunshine amid all that artificial light; her head placed upon her finely-moulded shoulders with a queen-like grace; a coronet of white roses on her dark brown hair, her only ornament. It was the beauty of the picture-gallery.

The eye of Coningsby never quitted her. When the dance ceased, he had an opportunity of seeing her nearer. He met her walking with her cavalier, and he was conscious that she observed him. Finally he remarked that she resumed a seat next to the lady whom he had mistaken for her mother, but had afterwards understood to be Lady Wallinger.

Coningsby returned to the other saloons; he witnessed the entrance and reception of Lady Monmouth, who moved on towards the ball-room. Soon after this, Sidonia arrived; he came in with the still handsome and ever courteous Duke D——s. Observing Coningsby, he stopped to present him to the Duke. While thus conversing, the Duke, who is fond of the English, observed, 'See, here is your beautiful countrywoman that all the world are talking of. That is her uncle. He brings to me letters from one of your lords, whose name I cannot recollect.'

And Sir Joseph and his lovely niece veritably approached. The Duke addressed them: asked them in the name of his Duchess to a concert on the next Thursday; and, after a thousand compliments, moved on. Sidonia stopped; Coningsby could not refrain from lingering, but stood a little apart, and was about to move away, when there was a whisper, of which, without hearing a word, he could not resist the impression that he was the subject. He felt a little embarrassed, and was retiring, when he heard

Sidonia reply to an inquiry of the lady, 'The same,' and then, turning to Coningsby, said aloud, 'Coningsby, Miss Millbank says that you have forgotten her.'

Coningsby started, advanced, coloured a little, could not conceal his surprise. The lady, too, though more prepared, was not without confusion, and for an instant looked down. Coningsby recalled at that moment the long dark eyelashes, and the beautiful, bashful countenance that had so charmed him at Millbank; but two years had otherwise effected a wonderful change in the sister of his school-day friend, and transformed the silent, embarrassed girl into a woman of surpassing beauty and of the most graceful and impressive mien.

'It is not surprising that Mr. Coningsby should not recollect my niece,' said Sir Joseph, addressing Sidonia, and wishing to cover their mutual embarrassment; 'but it is impossible for her, or for any one connected with her, not to be anxious at all times to express to him our sense of what we all owe him.'

Coningsby and Miss Millbank were now in full routine conversation, consisting of questions; how long she had been at Paris; when she had heard last from Millbank; how her father was; also, how was her brother. Sidonia made an observation to Sir Joseph on a passer-by, and then himself moved on; Coningsby accompanying his new friends in a contrary direction to the refreshment room, to which they were proceeding.

'And you have passed a winter at Rome,' said Coningsby. 'How I envy you! I feel that I shall never be able to travel.'

'And why not?'

'Life has become so stirring, that there is ever some great cause that keeps one at home.'

'Life, on the contrary, so swift, that all may see now that of which they once could only read.'

'The golden and silver sides of the shield,' said Coningsby, with a smile.

'And you, like a good knight, will maintain your own.'

'No, I would follow yours.'

'You have not heard lately from Oswald?'

'Oh, yes; I think there are no such faithful correspondents as we are; I only wish we could meet.'

'You will soon; but he is such a devotee of Oxford; quite a monk; and you, too, Mr. Coningsby, are much occupied.'

'Yes, and at the same time as Millbank. I was in hopes, when I once paid you a visit, I might have found your brother.'

'But that was such a rapid visit,' said Miss Millbank.

'I always remember it with delight,' said Coningsby.

'You were willing to be pleased; but Millbank, notwithstanding Rome, commands my affections, and in spite of this surrounding splendour, I could have wished to have passed my Christmas in Lancashire.'

'Mr. Millbank has lately purchased a very beautiful place in the county. I became acquainted with Hellingsley when staying at my grandfather's.'

'Ah! I have never seen it; indeed, I was much surprised that papa became its purchaser, because he never will live there; and Oswald, I am sure, could never be tempted to quit Millbank. You know what enthusiastic ideas he has of his order?'

'Like all his ideas, sound, and high, and pure. I always duly appreciated your brother's great abilities, and, what is far more important, his lofty mind. When I recollect our Eton days, I cannot understand how more than two years have passed away without our being together. I am sure the fault is mine. I might now have been at Oxford instead of Paris. And yet,' added Coningsby, 'that would have been a sad mistake, since I should not have had the happiness of being here.'

'Oh, yes, that would have been a sad mistake,' said Miss Millbank.

'Edith,' said Sir Joseph, rejoining his niece, from whom he had been momentarily separated, 'Edith, that is Monsieur Thiers.'

In the meantime, Sidonia reached the ball-room, and sitting near the entrance was Lady Monmouth, who immediately addressed him. He was, as usual, intelligent and unimpassioned, and yet not without a delicate deference which is flattering to women, especially if not altogether unworthy of it. Sidonia always admired Lucretia, and preferred her society to that of most persons. But the lady was in error in supposing that she had conquered or could vanquish his heart. Sidonia was one of those men, not so rare as may be supposed, who shrink, above all things, from an adventure of gallantry with a woman in a position. He had neither time nor temper for sentimental circumvolutions. He detested the diplomacy of passion: protocols, protracted negotiations, conferences, correspondence, treaties projected, ratified, violated. He had no genius for the tactics of intrigue; your reconnoiterings, and marchings, and counter-marchings, sappings and minings, assaults,

sometimes surrenders, and sometimes repulses. All the solemn and studied hypocrisies were to him infinitely wearisome; and if the movements were not merely formal, they irritated him, distracted his feelings, disturbed the tenor of his mind, deranged his nervous system. Something of the old Oriental vein influenced him in his carriage toward women. He was oftener behind the scenes of the Opera House than in his box; he delighted, too, in the society of ἑταῖραι; Aspasia was his heroine. Obliged to appear much in what is esteemed pure society, he cultivated the acquaintance of clever women, because they interested him; but in such saloons his feminine acquaintances were merely psychological. No lady could accuse him of trifling with her feelings, however decided might be his predilection for her conversation. He yielded at once to an admirer; never trespassed by any chance into the domain of sentiment; never broke, by any accident or blunder, into the irregular paces of flirtation; was a man who notoriously would never diminish by marriage the purity of his race; and one who always maintained that passion and polished life were quite incompatible. He liked the drawing-room, and he liked the desert, but he would not consent that either should trench on their mutual privileges.

The Princess Lucretia had yielded herself to the spell of Sidonia's society at Coningsby Castle, when she knew that marriage was impossible. But she loved him; and with an Italian spirit. Now they met again, and she was the Marchioness of Monmouth, a very great lady, very much admired, and followed, and courted, and very powerful. It is our great moralist who tells us, in the immortal page, that an af-

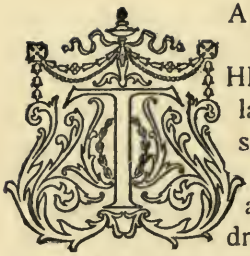
fair of gallantry with a great lady is more delightful than with ladies of a lower degree. In this he contradicts the good old ballad; but certain it is that Dr. Johnson announced to Boswell, 'Sir, in the case of a Countess the imagination is more excited.'

But Sidonia was a man on whom the conventional superiorities of life produced as little effect as a flake falling on the glaciers of the high Alps. His comprehension of the world and human nature was too vast and complete; he understood too well the relative value of things to appreciate anything but essential excellence; and that not too much. A charming woman was not more charming to him because she chanced to be an empress in a particular district of one of the smallest planets; a charming woman under any circumstances was not an unique animal. When Sidonia felt a disposition to be spell-bound, he used to review in his memory all the charming women of whom he had read in the books of all literatures, and whom he had known himself in every court and clime, and the result of his reflections ever was, that the charming woman in question was by no means the paragon, which some who had read, seen, and thought less, might be inclined to esteem her. There was, indeed, no subject on which Sidonia discoursed so felicitously as on woman, and none on which Lord Eskdale more frequently endeavoured to attract him. He would tell you Talmudical stories about our Mother Eve and the Queen of Sheba, which would have astonished you. There was not a free lady of Greece, Leontium and Phryne, Lais, Danae, and Lamia, the Egyptian girl Thonis, respecting whom he could not tell you as many diverting tales as if they were ladies of Loretto; not a nook of Athenæus, not

an obscure scholiast, not a passage in a Greek orator, that could throw light on these personages, which was not at his command. What stories he would tell you about Marc Antony and the actress Cytheris in their chariot drawn by tigers! What a character would he paint of that Flora who gave her gardens to the Roman people! It would draw tears to your eyes. No man was ever so learned in the female manners of the last centuries of polytheism as Sidonia. You would have supposed that he had devoted his studies peculiarly to that period if you had not chanced to draw him to the Italian middle ages. And even these startling revelations were almost eclipsed by his anecdotes of the Court of Henry III. of France, with every character of which he was as familiar as with the brilliant groups that at this moment filled the saloons of Madame de R——d.

CHAPTER XLIX.

A Worthy Whig.



HE image of Edith Millbank was the last thought of Coningsby, as he sank into an agitated slumber. To him had hitherto in general been accorded the precious boon of dreamless sleep. Homer tells us these phantasmas come from Jove; they are rather the children of a distracted soul. Coningsby this night lived much in past years, varied by painful perplexities of the present, which he could neither subdue nor comprehend. The scene flitted from Eton to the castle of his grandfather; and then he found himself among the pictures of the Rue de Tronchet, but their owner bore the features of the senior Millbank. A beautiful countenance that was alternately the face in the mysterious picture, and then that of Edith, haunted him under all circumstances. He woke little refreshed; restless, and yet sensible of some secret joy.

He woke to think of her of whom he had dreamed. The light had dawned on his soul. Coningsby loved.

Ah! what is that ambition that haunts our youth, that thirst for power or that lust of fame that forces us from obscurity into the sunblaze of the world, what are these sentiments so high, so vehement, so

ennobling? They vanish, and in an instant, before the glance of a woman!

Coningsby had scarcely quitted her side the preceding eve. He hung upon the accents of that clear sweet voice, and sought, with tremulous fascination, the gleaming splendour of those soft dark eyes. And now he sat in his chamber, with his eyes fixed upon vacancy. All thoughts and feelings, pursuits, desires, life, merge in one absorbing sentiment.

It is impossible to exist without seeing her again, and instantly. He had requested and gained permission to call on Lady Wallinger; he would not lose a moment in availing himself of it. As early as was tolerably decorous, and before, in all probability, they could quit their hotel, Coningsby repaired to the Rue de Rivoli to pay his respects to his new friends.

As he walked along, he indulged in fanciful speculations which connected Edith and the mysterious portrait of his mother. He felt himself, as it were, near the fulfilment of some fate, and on the threshold of some critical discovery. He recalled the impatient, even alarmed, expressions of Rigby at Montem six years ago, when he proposed to invite young Millbank to his grandfather's dinner; the vindictive feud that existed between the two families, and for which political opinion, or even party passion, could not satisfactorily account; and he reasoned himself into a conviction that the solution of many perplexities was at hand, and that all would be consummated to the satisfaction of every one by his unexpected but inevitable agency.

Coningsby found Sir Joseph alone. The worthy Baronet was at any rate no participator in Mr. Millbank's vindictive feelings against Lord Monmouth.

On the contrary, he had a very high respect for a Marquess, whatever might be his opinions, and no mean consideration for a Marquess's grandson. Sir Joseph had inherited a large fortune made by commerce, and had increased it by the same means. He was a middle-class Whig, had faithfully supported that party in his native town during the days they wandered in the wilderness, and had well earned his share of the milk and honey when they vanquished the promised land. In the spring-tide of Liberalism, when the world was not analytical of free opinions, and odious distinctions were not drawn between finality men and progressive reformers, Mr. Wallinger had been the popular leader of a powerful body of his fellow-citizens, who had returned him to the first Reformed Parliament, and where, in spite of many a menacing registration, he had contrived to remain. He had never given a Radical vote without the permission of the Secretary of the Treasury, and was not afraid of giving an unpopular one to serve his friends. He was not like that distinguished Liberal, who, after dining with the late Whig Premier, expressed his gratification and his gratitude, by assuring his Lordship that he might count on his support on all popular questions.

'I want men who will support the government on all unpopular questions,' replied the witty statesman.

Mr. Wallinger was one of these men. His high character and strong purse were always in the front rank in the hour of danger. His support in the House was limited to his votes; but in other places equally important, at a meeting at a political club, or in Downing Street, he could find his tongue, take what

is called a 'practical' view of a question, adopt what is called an 'independent tone,' reanimate confidence in ministers, check mutiny, and set a bright and bold example to the wavering. A man of his property, and high character, and sound views, so practical and so independent, this was evidently the block from which a Baronet should be cut, and in due time he figured Sir Joseph.

A Spanish gentleman of ample means, and of a good Catalan family, flying during a political convulsion to England, arrived with his two daughters at Liverpool, and bore letters of introduction to the house of Wallinger. Some little time after this, by one of those stormy vicissitudes of political fortune, of late years not unusual in the Peninsula, he returned to his native country, and left his children, and the management of that portion of his fortune that he had succeeded in bringing with him, under the guardianship of the father of the present Sir Joseph. This gentleman was about again to become an exile, when he met with an untimely end in one of those terrible tumults of which Barcelona is the frequent scene.

The younger Wallinger was touched by the charms of one of his father's wards. Her beauty of a character to which he was unaccustomed, her accomplishments of society, and the refinement of her manners, conspicuous in the circle in which he lived, captivated him; and though they had no heir, the union had been one of great felicity. Sir Joseph was proud of his wife; he secretly considered himself, though his 'tone' was as liberal and independent as in old days, to be on the threshold of aristocracy, and was conscious that Lady Wallinger played her part not unworthily in the elevated circles in which they now

frequently found themselves. Sir Joseph was fond of great people, and not averse to travel; because, bearing a title, and being a member of the British Parliament, and always moving with the appendages of wealth, servants, carriages, and couriers, and fortified with no lack of letters from the Foreign Office, he was everywhere acknowledged, and received, and treated as a personage; was invited to court-balls, dined with ambassadors, and found himself and his lady at every festival of distinction.

The elder Millbank had been Joseph Wallinger's youthful friend. Different as were their dispositions and the rate of their abilities, their political opinions were the same; and commerce habitually connected their interests. During a visit to Liverpool, Millbank had made the acquaintance of the sister of Lady Wallinger, and had been a successful suitor for her hand. This lady was the mother of Edith and of the schoolfellow of Coningsby. It was only within a very few years that she had died; she had scarcely lived long enough to complete the education of her daughter, to whom she was devoted, and on whom she lavished the many accomplishments that she possessed. Lady Wallinger having no children, and being very fond of her niece, had watched over Edith with infinite solicitude, and finally had persuaded Mr. Millbank that it would be well that his daughter should accompany them in their somewhat extensive travels. It was not, therefore, only that nature had developed a beautiful woman out of a bashful girl since Coningsby's visit to Millbank; but really, every means and every opportunity that could contribute to render an individual capable of adorning the most accomplished circles of life, had naturally, and without

effort, fallen to the fortunate lot of the manufacturer's daughter. Edith possessed an intelligence equal to those occasions. Without losing the native simplicity of her character, which sprang from the heart, and which the strong and original bent of her father's mind had fostered, she had imbibed all the refinement and facility of the polished circles in which she moved. She had a clear head, a fine taste, and a generous spirit; had received so much admiration, that, though by no means insensible to homage, her heart was free; was strongly attached to her family; and, notwithstanding all the splendour of Rome, and the brilliancy of Paris, her thoughts were often in her Saxon valley, amid the green hills and busy factories of Millbank.

Sir Joseph, finding himself alone with the grandson of Lord Monmouth, was not very anxious that the ladies should immediately appear. He thought this a good opportunity of getting at what are called 'the real feelings of the Tory party;' and be began to pump with a seductive semblance of frankness. For his part, he had never doubted that a Conservative government was ultimately inevitable; had told Lord John so two years ago, and, between themselves, Lord John was of the same opinion. The present position of the Whigs was the necessary fate of all progressive parties; could not see exactly how it would end; thought sometimes it must end in a fusion of parties; but could not well see how that could be brought about, at least at present. For his part, should be happy to witness an union of the best men of all parties, for the preservation of peace and order, without any reference to any particular opinions. And, in that sense of the word, it was not at

all impossible he might find it his duty some day to support a Conservative government.

Sir Joseph was much astonished when Coningsby, who being somewhat impatient for the entrance of the ladies, was rather more abrupt than his wont, told the worthy Baronet that he looked upon a government without distinct principles of policy as only a stop-gap to a widespread and demoralising anarchy; that he for one could not comprehend how a free government could endure without national opinions to uphold it; and that governments for the preservation of peace and order, and nothing else, had better be sought in China, or among the Austrians, the Chinese of Europe. As for Conservative government, the natural question was, What do you mean to conserve? Do you mean to conserve things or only names, realities or merely appearances? Or, do you mean to continue the system commenced in 1834, and, with a hypocritical reverence for the principles, and a superstitious adhesion to the forms, of the old exclusive constitution, carry on your policy by latitudinarian practice?

Sir Joseph stared; it was the first time that any inkling of the views of the New Generation had caught his ear. They were strange and unaccustomed accents. He was extremely perplexed; could by no means make out what his companion was driving at; at length, with a rather knowing smile, expressive as much of compassion as comprehension, he remarked,

'Ah! I see; you are a regular Orangeman.'

'I look upon an Orangeman,' said Coningsby, 'as a pure Whig; the only professor and practiser of unadulterated Whiggism.'

This was too much for Sir Joseph, whose political knowledge did not reach much further back than the ministry of the Mediocrities; hardly touched the times of the Corresponding Society. But he was a cautious man, and never replied in haste. He was about feeling his way, when he experienced the golden advantage of gaining time, for the ladies entered.

The heart of Coningsby throbbed as Edith appeared. She extended to him her hand; her face radiant with kind expression. Lady Wallinger seemed gratified also by his visit. She had much elegance in her manner; a calm, soft address; and she spoke English with a sweet Doric irregularity. They all sat down, talked of the last night's ball, of a thousand things. There was something animating in the frank, cheerful spirit of Edith. She had a quick eye both for the beautiful and the ridiculous, and threw out her observations in terse and vivid phrases. An hour, and more than an hour, passed away, and Coningsby still found some excuse not to depart. It seemed that on this morning they were about to make an expedition into the antique city of Paris, to visit some old hotels which retained their character; especially they had heard much of the hotel of the Archbishop of Sens, with its fortified courtyard. Coningsby expressed great interest in the subject, and showed some knowledge. Sir Joseph invited him to join the party, which of all things in the world was what he most desired.

CHAPTER L.

Unpleasant Gossip.

NOT a day elapsed without Coningsby being in the company of Edith. Time was precious for him, for the spires and pinnacles of Cambridge already began to loom in the distance, and he resolved to make the most determined efforts not to lose a day of his liberty. And yet to call every morning in the Rue de Rivoli was an exploit which surpassed even the audacity of love! More than once, making the attempt, his courage failed him, and he turned into the gardens of the Tuileries, and only watched the windows of the house. Circumstances, however, favoured him: he received a letter from Oswald Millbank; he was bound to communicate in person this evidence of his friend's existence; and when he had to reply to the letter, he must necessarily inquire whether his friend's relatives had any message to transmit to him. These, however, were only slight advantages. What assisted Coningsby in his plans and wishes was the great pleasure which Sidonia, with whom he passed a great deal of his time, took in the society of the Wallingers and their niece. Sidonia presented Lady Wallinger with his opera-box during her stay at Paris;

invited them frequently to his agreeable dinner-parties; and announced his determination to give a ball, which Lady Wallinger esteemed a delicate attention to Edith; while Lady Monmouth flattered herself that the festival sprang from the desire she had expressed of seeing the celebrated hotel of Sidonia to advantage.

Coningsby was very happy. His morning visits to the Rue de Rivoli seemed always welcome, and seldom an evening elapsed in which he did not find himself in the society of Edith. She seemed not to wish to conceal that his presence gave her pleasure, and though she had many admirers, and had an airy graciousness for all of them, Coningsby sometimes indulged the exquisite suspicion that there was a flattering distinction in her carriage to himself. Under the influence of these feelings, he began daily to be more conscious that separation would be an intolerable calamity; he began to meditate upon the feasibility of keeping a half term, and of postponing his departure to Cambridge to a period nearer the time when Edith would probably return to England.

In the meanwhile, the Parisian world talked much of the grand *fête* which was about to be given by Sidonia. Coningsby heard much of it one day when dining at his grandfather's. Lady Monmouth seemed very intent on the occasion. Even Lord Monmouth half talked of going, though for his part he wished people would come to him, and never ask him to their houses. That was his idea of society. He liked the world, but he liked to find it under his own roof. He grudged them nothing, so that they would not insist upon the reciprocity of cold-catching, and would eat his good dinners instead of insisting on his eating their bad ones.

'But Monsieur Sidonia's cook is a gem, they say,' observed an attaché of an embassy.

'I have no doubt of it; Sidonia is a man of sense, almost the only man of sense I know. I never caught him tripping. He never makes a false move. Sidonia is exactly the sort of man I like; you know you cannot deceive him, and that he does not want to deceive you. I wish he liked a rubber more. Then he would be perfect.'

'They say he is going to be married,' said the attaché.

'Poh!' said Lord Monmouth.

'Married!' exclaimed Lady Monmouth. 'To whom?'

'To your beautiful countrywoman, *la belle Anglaise*, that all the world talks of,' said the attaché.

'And who may she be, pray?' said the Marquess. 'I have so many beautiful countrywomen.'

'Mademoiselle Millbank,' said the attaché.

'Millbank!' said the Marquess, with a lowering brow. 'There are so many Millbanks. Do you know what Millbank this is, Harry?' he inquired of his grandson, who had listened to the conversation with a rather embarrassed and even agitated spirit.

'What, sir; yes, Millbank?' said Coningsby.

'I say, do you know who this Millbank is?'

'Oh! Miss Millbank: yes, I believe, that is, I know a daughter of the—the gentleman who purchased some property near you.'

'Oh! that fellow! Has he got a daughter here?'

'The most beautiful girl in Paris,' said the attaché.

'Lady Monmouth, have you seen this beauty, that Sidonia is going to marry?' he added, with a fiendish laugh.

'I have seen the young lady,' said Lady Monmouth; 'but I had not heard that Monsieur Sidonia was about to marry her.'

'Is she so very beautiful?' inquired another gentleman.

'Yes,' said Lady Monmouth, calm, but pale.

'Poh!' said the Marquess again.

'I assure you that it is a fact,' said the Attaché, 'not at least an *on dit*. I have it from a quarter that could not well be mistaken.'

Behold a little snatch of ordinary dinner gossip that left a very painful impression on the minds of three individuals who were present.

The name of Millbank revived in Lord Monmouth's mind a sense of defeat, discomfiture, and disgust; Hellingsley, lost elections, and Mr. Rigby; three subjects which Lord Monmouth had succeeded for a time in expelling from his sensations. His lordship thought that, in all probability, this beauty of whom they spoke so highly was not really the daughter of his foe; that it was some confusion which had arisen from the similarity of names: nor did he believe that Sidonia was going to marry her, whoever she might be; but a variety of things had been said at dinner, and a number of images had been raised in his mind that touched his spleen. He took his wine freely, and, the usual consequence of that proceeding with Lord Monmouth, became silent and sullen. As for Lady Monmouth, she had learnt that Sidonia, whatever might be the result, was paying very marked attention to another woman, for whom undoubtedly he was giving that very ball which she had flattered herself was a homage to her wishes, and for which she had projected a new dress of eclipsing splendour.

Coningsby felt quite sure that the story of Sidonia's marriage with Edith was the most ridiculous idea that ever entered into the imagination of man; at least he thought he felt quite sure. But the idlest and wildest report that the woman you love is about to marry another is not comfortable. Besides, he could not conceal from himself that, between the Wallingers and Sidonia there existed a remarkable intimacy, fully extended to their niece. He had seen her certainly on more than one occasion in lengthened and apparently earnest conversation with Sidonia, who, by-the-bye, spoke with her often in Spanish, and never concealed his admiration of her charms or the interest he found in her society. And Edith; what, after all, had passed between Edith and himself which should at all gainsay this report, which he had been particularly assured was not a mere report, but came from a quarter that could not well be mistaken? She had received him with kindness. And how should she receive one who was the friend and preserver of her only brother, and apparently the intimate and cherished acquaintance of her future husband? Coningsby felt that sickness of the heart that accompanies one's first misfortune. The illusions of life seemed to dissipate and disappear. He was miserable; he had no confidence in himself, in his future. After all, what was he? A dependent on a man of very absolute will and passions. Could he forget the glance with which Lord Monmouth caught the name of Millbank, and received the intimation of Hellingsley? It was a glance for a Spagnoletto or a Caravaggio to catch and immortalise. Why, if Edith were not going to marry Sidonia, how was he ever to marry her, even if she cared for him? Oh! what a future of unbroken, continuous, inter-

minable misery awaited him! Was there ever yet born a being with a destiny so dark and dismal? He was the most forlorn of men, utterly wretched! He had entirely mistaken his own character. He had no energy, no abilities, not a single eminent quality. All was over!

CHAPTER LI.

An Accident and a Revelation.

IT WAS fated that Lady Monmouth should not be present at that ball, the anticipation of which had occasioned her so much pleasure and some pangs.

On the morning after that slight conversation, which had so disturbed the souls, though unconsciously to each other, of herself and Coningsby, the Marquess was driving Lucretia up the avenue Marigny in his phaeton. About the centre of the avenue the horses took fright, and started off at a wild pace. The Marquess was an experienced whip, calm, and with exertion still very powerful. He would have soon mastered the horses, had not one of the reins unhappily broken. The horses swerved; the Marquess kept his seat; Lucretia, alarmed, sprang up, the carriage was dashed against the trunk of a tree, and she was thrown out of it, at the very instant that one of the outriders had succeeded in heading the equipage and checking the horses.

The Marchioness was senseless. Lord Monmouth had descended from the phaeton; several passengers had assembled; the door of a contiguous house was

opened; there were offers of service, sympathy, inquiries, a babble of tongues, great confusion.

'Get surgeons and send for her maid,' said Lord Monmouth to one of his servants.

In the midst of this distressing tumult, Sidonia, on horseback, followed by a groom, came up the avenue from the Champs Elysées. The empty phaeton, reins broken, horses held by strangers, all the appearances of a misadventure, attracted him. He recognised the livery. He instantly dismounted. Moving aside the crowd, he perceived Lady Monmouth senseless and prostrate, and her husband, without assistance, restraining the injudicious efforts of the bystanders.

'Let us carry her in, Lord Monmouth,' said Sidonia, exchanging a recognition as he took Lucretia in his arms, and bore her into the dwelling that was at hand. Those who were standing at the door assisted him. The woman of the house and Lord Monmouth only were present.

'I would hope there is no fracture,' said Sidonia, placing her on a sofa, 'nor does it appear to me that the percussion of the head, though considerable, could have been fatally violent. I have caught her pulse. Keep her in a horizontal position, and she will soon come to herself.'

The Marquess seated himself in a chair by the side of the sofa, which Sidonia had advanced to the middle of the room. Lord Monmouth was silent and very serious. Sidonia opened the window, and touched the brow of Lucretia with water. At this moment M. Villebecque and a surgeon entered the chamber.

'The brain cannot be affected, with that pulse,' said the surgeon; 'there is no fracture.'

'How pale she is!' said Lord Monmouth, as if he were examining a picture.

'The colour seems to me to return,' said Sidonia.

The surgeon applied some restoratives which he had brought with him. The face of the Marchioness showed signs of life; she stirred.

'She revives,' said the surgeon.

The Marchioness breathed with some force; again; then half-opened her eyes, and then instantly closed them.

'If I could but get her to take this draught,' said the surgeon.

'Stop! moisten her lips first,' said Sidonia.

They placed the draught to her mouth; in a moment she put forth her hand as if to repress them, then opened her eyes again, and sighed.

'She is herself,' said the surgeon.

'Lucretia!' said the Marquess.

'Sidonia!' said the Marchioness.

Lord Monmouth looked round to invite his friend to come forward.

'Lady Monmouth!' said Sidonia, in a gentle voice.

She started, rose a little on the sofa, stared around her. 'Where am I?' she exclaimed.

'With me,' said the Marquess; and he bent forward to her, and took her hand.

'Sidonia!' she again exclaimed, in a voice of inquiry.

'Is here,' said Lord Monmouth. 'He carried you in after our accident.'

'Accident! Why is he going to marry?'

The Marquess took a pinch of snuff.

There was an awkward pause in the chamber.

'I think now,' said Sidonia to the surgeon, 'that Lady Monmouth would take the draught.'

She refused it.

'Try you, Sidonia,' said the Marquess, rather drily.

'You feel yourself again?' said Sidonia, advancing.

'Would I did not!' said the Marchioness, with an air of stupor. 'What has happened? Why am I here? Are you married?'

'She wanders a little,' said Sidonia.

The Marquess took another pinch of snuff.

'I could have borne even repulsion,' said Lady Monmouth, in a voice of desolation, 'but not for another!'

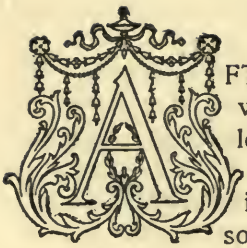
'M. Villebecque!' said the Marquess.

'My lord?'

Lord Monmouth looked at him with that irresistible scrutiny which would daunt a galley-slave; and then, after a short pause, said, 'The carriage should have arrived by this time. Let us get home.'

CHAPTER LII.

The Return.



FTER the conversation at dinner, which we have noticed, the restless and disquieted Coningsby wandered about Paris, vainly seeking in the distraction of a great city some relief from the excitement of his mind. His first resolution was immediately to depart for England; but when, on reflection, he was mindful that, after all, the assertion which had so agitated him might really be without foundation, in spite of many circumstances that to his regardful fancy seemed to accredit it, his firm resolution began to waver.

These were the first pangs of jealousy that Coningsby had ever experienced, and they revealed to him the immensity of the stake which he was hazarding on a most uncertain die.

The next morning he called in the Rue Rivoli, and was informed that the family were not at home. He was returning under the arcades, towards the Rue St. Florentin, when Sidonia passed him in an opposite direction, on horseback, and at a rapid rate. Coningsby, who was not observed by him, could not resist a strange temptation to watch for a moment his

progress. He saw him enter the court of the hotel where the Wallinger family were staying. Would he come forth immediately? No. Coningsby stood still and pale. Minute followed minute. Coningsby flattered himself that Sidonia was only speaking to the porter. Then he would fain believe Sidonia was writing a note. Then, crossing the street, he mounted by some steps the terrace of the Tuileries, nearly opposite the Hotel of the Minister of Finance, and watched the house. A quarter of an hour elapsed; Sidonia did not come forth. They were at home to him; only to him. Sick at heart, infinitely wretched, scarcely able to guide his steps, dreading even to meet an acquaintance, and almost feeling that his tongue would refuse the office of conversation, he contrived to reach his grandfather's hotel, and was about to bury himself in his chamber, when on the staircase he met Flora.

Coningsby had not seen her for the last fortnight. Seeing her now, his heart smote him for his neglect, excusable as it really was. Any one else at this time he would have hurried by without recognition, but the gentle and suffering Flora was too meek to be rudely treated by so kind a heart as Coningsby's.

He looked at her; she was pale and agitated. Her step trembled, while she still hastened on.

'What is the matter?' inquired Coningsby.

'My lord, the Marchioness, are in danger, thrown from their carriage.' Briefly she detailed to Coningsby all that had occurred; that M. Villebecque had already repaired to them; that she herself only this moment had learned the intelligence that seemed to agitate her to the centre. Coningsby instantly turned with her; but they had scarcely emerged from the

courtyard when the carriage approached that brought Lord and Lady Monmouth home. They followed it into the court. They were immediately at its door.

'All is right, Harry,' said the Marquess, calm and grave.

Coningsby pressed his grandfather's hand. Then he assisted Lucretia to alight.

'I am quite well,' she said, 'now.'

'But you must lean on me, dearest Lady Monmouth,' Coningsby said in a tone of tenderness, as he felt Lucretia almost sinking from him. And he supported her into the hall of the hotel.

Lord Monmouth had lingered behind. Flora crept up to him, and with unwonted boldness offered her arm to the Marquess. He looked at her with a glance of surprise, and then a softer expression, one indeed of an almost winning sweetness, which, though rare, was not a stranger to his countenance, melted his features, and taking the arm so humbly presented, he said,

'*Ma Petite,* you look more frightened than any of us. Poor child!'

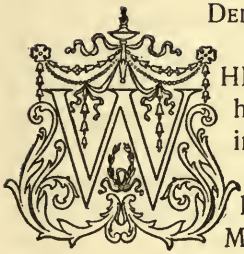
He had reached the top of the flight of steps; he withdrew his arm from Flora, and thanked her with all his courtesy.

'You are not hurt then, sir?' she ventured to ask with a look that expressed the infinite solicitude which her tongue did not venture to convey.

'By no means, my good little girl;' and he extended his hand to her, which she reverently bent over and embraced.

CHAPTER LIII.

Delicious Torments.



HEN Coningsby had returned to his grandfather's hotel that morning, it was with a determination to leave Paris the next day for England; but the accident to Lady Monmouth, though, as it ultimately appeared, accompanied by no very serious consequences, quite dissipated this intention. It was impossible to quit them so crudely at such a moment. So he remained another day, and that was the day preceding Sidonia's *fête,* which he particularly resolved not to attend. He felt it quite impossible that he could again endure the sight of either Sidonia or Edith. He looked upon them as persons who had deeply injured him; though they really were individuals who had treated him with invariable kindness. But he felt their existence was a source of mortification and misery to him. With these feelings, sauntering away the last hours at Paris, disquieted, uneasy; no present, no future; no enjoyment, no hope; really, positively, undeniably unhappy; unhappy too for the first time in his life; the first unhappiness; what a companion piece for the first love! Coningsby, of all

places in the world, in the gardens of the Luxembourg, encountered Sir Joseph Wallinger and Edith.

To avoid them was impossible; they met face to face; and Sir Joseph stopped, and immediately reminded him that it was three days since they had seen him, as if to reproach him for so unprecedented a neglect. And it seemed that Edith, though she said not as much, felt the same. And Coningsby turned round and walked with them. He told them he was going to leave Paris on the morrow.

'And miss Monsieur de Sidonia's *fête,* of which we have all talked so much!' said Edith, with unaffected surprise, and an expression of disappointment which she in vain attempted to conceal.

'The festival will not be less gay for my absence,' said Coningsby, with that plaintive moroseness not unusual to despairing lovers.

'If we were all to argue from the same premises, and act accordingly,' said Edith, 'the saloons would be empty. But if any person's absence would be remarked, I should really have thought it would be yours. I thought you were one of Monsieur de Sidonia's great friends?'

'He has no friends,' said Coningsby. 'No wise man has. What are friends? Traitors.'

Edith looked much astonished. And then she said,

'I am sure you have not quarrelled with Monsieur de Sidonia, for we have just parted with him.'

'I have no doubt you have,' thought Coningsby.

'And it is impossible to speak of another in higher terms than he spoke of you.' Sir Joseph observed how unusual it was for Monsieur de Sidonia to express himself so warmly.

'Sidonia is a great man, and carries everything before him,' said Coningsby. 'I am nothing; I cannot cope with him; I retire from the field.'

'What field?' inquired Sir Joseph, who did not clearly catch the drift of these observations. 'It appears to me that a field for action is exactly what Sidonia wants. There is no vent for his abilities and intelligence. He wastes his energy in travelling from capital to capital like a King's messenger. The morning after his *fête* he is going to Madrid.'

This brought some reference to their mutual movements. Edith spoke of her return to Lancashire, of her hope that Mr. Coningsby would soon see Oswald; but Mr. Coningsby informed her that though he was going to leave Paris, he had no intention of returning to England; that he had not yet quite made up his mind whither he should go; but thought that he should travel direct to St. Petersburg. He wished to travel overland to Astrachan. That was the place he was particularly anxious to visit.

After this incomprehensible announcement, they walked on for some minutes in silence, broken only by occasional monosyllables, with which Coningsby responded at hazard to the sound remarks of Sir Joseph. As they approached the Palace a party of English who were visiting the Chamber of Peers, and who were acquainted with the companions of Coningsby, encountered them. Amid the mutual recognitions, Coningsby was about to take his leave somewhat ceremoniously, but Edith held forth her hand, and said,

'Is this indeed farewell?'

His heart was agitated, his countenance changed; he retained her hand amid the chattering tourists, too

full of their criticisms and their egotistical commonplaces to notice what was passing. A sentimental ebullition seemed to be on the point of taking place. Their eyes met. The look of Edith was mournful and inquiring.

'We will say farewell at the ball,' said Coningsby, and she rewarded him with a radiant smile.

CHAPTER LIV.

Sidonia's Fête.

IDONIA lived in the Faubourg St. Germain, in a large hotel that, in old days, had belonged to the Crillons; but it had received at his hands such extensive alterations that nothing of the original decoration, and little of its arrangement, remained.

A flight of marble steps, ascending from a vast court, led into a hall of great dimensions, which was at the same time an orangery and a gallery of sculpture. It was illumined by a distinct, yet soft and subdued light, which harmonised with the beautiful repose of the surrounding forms, and with the exotic perfume that was wafted about. A gallery led from this hall to an inner hall of quite a different character; fantastic, glittering, variegated; full of strange shapes and dazzling objects.

The roof was carved and gilt in that honeycomb style prevalent in the Saracenic buildings; the walls were hung with leather stamped in rich and vivid patterns; the floor was a flood of mosaic; about were statues of negroes of human size with faces of wild expression, and holding in their outstretched hands

silver torches that blazed with an almost painful brilliancy.

From this inner hall a double staircase of white marble led to the grand suite of apartments.

These saloons, lofty, spacious, and numerous, had been decorated principally in encaustic by the most celebrated artists of Munich. The three principal rooms were only separated from each other by columns, covered with rich hangings, on this night drawn aside. The decoration of each chamber was appropriate to its purpose. On the walls of the ballroom nymphs and heroes moved in measure in Sicilian landscapes, or on the azure shores of Ægean waters. From the ceiling beautiful divinities threw garlands on the guests, who seemed surprised that the roses, unwilling to quit Olympus, would not descend on earth. The general effect of this fair chamber was heightened, too, by that regulation of the house which did not permit any benches in the ballroom. That dignified assemblage who are always found ranged in precise discipline against the wall, did not here mar the flowing grace of the festivity. The chaperons had no cause to complain. A large saloon abounded in ottomans and easy chairs at their service, where their delicate charges might rest when weary, or find distraction when not engaged.

All the world were at this *fête* of Sidonia. It exceeded in splendour and luxury every entertainment that had yet been given. The highest rank, even Princes of the blood, beauty, fashion, fame, all assembled in a magnificent and illuminated palace, resounding with exquisite melody.

Coningsby, though somewhat depressed, was not insensible to the magic of the scene. Since the pas-

sage in the gardens of the Luxembourg, that tone, that glance, he had certainly felt much relieved, happier. And yet if all were, with regard to Sidonia, as unfounded as he could possibly desire, where was he then? Had he forgotten his grandfather, that fell look, that voice of intense detestation? What was Millbank to him? Where, what was the mystery? for of some he could not doubt. The Spanish parentage of Edith had only more perplexed Coningsby. It offered no solution. There could be no connection between a Catalan family and his mother, the daughter of a clergyman in a midland county. That there was any relationship between the Millbank family and his mother was contradicted by the conviction in which he had been brought up, that his mother had no relations; that she returned to England utterly friendless; without a relative, a connection, an acquaintance to whom she could appeal. Her complete forlornness was stamped upon his brain. Tender as were his years when he was separated from her, he could yet recall the very phrases in which she deplored her isolation; and there were numerous passages in her letters which alluded to it. Coningsby had taken occasion to sound the Wallingers on this subject; but he felt assured, from the manner in which his advances were met, that they knew nothing of his mother, and attributed the hostility of Mr. Millbank to his grandfather solely to political emulation and local rivalries. Still there were the portrait and the miniature. That was a fact; a clue which ultimately, he was persuaded, must lead to some solution.

Coningsby had met with great social success at Paris. He was at once a favourite. The Parisian

dames decided in his favour. He was a specimen of the highest style of English beauty, which is popular in France. His air was acknowledged as distinguished. The men also liked him; he had not quite arrived at that age when you make enemies. The moment, therefore, that he found himself in the saloons of Sidonia, he was accosted by many whose notice was flattering; but his eye wandered, while he tried to be courteous and attempted to be sprightly. Where was she? He had nearly reached the ball-room when he met her. She was on the arm of Lord Beaumanoir, who had made her acquaintance at Rome, and orginally claimed it as the member of a family who, as the reader may perhaps not forget, had experienced some kindnesses from the Millbanks.

There were mutual and hearty recognitions between the young men; great explanations where they had been, what they were doing, where they were going. Lord Beaumanoir told Coningsby he had introduced steeple-chases at Rome, and had parted with Sunbeam to the nephew of a Cardinal. Coningsby securing Edith's hand for the next dance, they all moved on together to her aunt.

Lady Wallinger was indulging in some Roman reminiscences with the Marquess.

'And you are not going to Astrachan to-morrow?' said Edith.

'Not to-morrow,' said Coningsby.

'You know that you said once that life was too stirring in these days to permit travel to a man?'

'I wish nothing was stirring,' said Coningsby. 'I wish nothing to change. All that I wish is, that this *fête* should never end.'

'Is it possible that you can be capricious? You perplex me very much.'

'Am I capricious because I dislike change?'

'But Astrachan?'

'It was the air of the Luxembourg that reminded me of the desert,' said Coningsby.

Soon after this Coningsby led Edith to the dance. It was at a ball that he had first met her at Paris, and this led to other reminiscences; all most interesting. Coningsby was perfectly happy. All mysteries, all difficulties, were driven from his recollection; he lived only in the exciting and enjoyable present. Twenty-one and in love!

Some time after this, Coningsby, who was inevitably separated from Edith, met his host.

'Where have you been, child,' said Sidonia, 'that I have not seen you for some days? I am going to Madrid to-morrow.'

'And I must think, I suppose, of Cambridge.'

'Well, you have seen something; you will find it more profitable when you have digested it; and you will have opportunity. That's the true spring of wisdom: meditate over the past. Adventure and contemplation share our being like day and night.'

The resolute departure for England on the morrow had already changed into a supposed necessity of thinking of returning to Cambridge. In fact, Coningsby felt that to quit Paris and Edith was an impossibility. He silenced the remonstrance of his conscience by the expedient of keeping a half-term, and had no difficulty in persuading himself that a short delay in taking his degree could not really be of the slightest consequence.

It was the hour for supper. The guests at a

French ball are not seen to advantage at this period. The custom of separating the sexes for this refreshment, and arranging that the ladies should partake of it by themselves, though originally founded in a feeling of consideration and gallantry, and with the determination to secure, under all circumstances, the convenience and comfort of the fair sex, is really, in its appearance and its consequences, anything but European and produces a scene which rather reminds one of the harem of a sultan than a hall of chivalry. To judge from the countenances of the favoured fair, they are not themselves particularly pleased; and when their repast is over they necessarily return to empty halls, and are deprived of the dance at the very moment when they may feel most inclined to participate in its graceful excitement.

These somewhat ungracious circumstances, however, were not attendant on the festival of this night. There was opened in the hotel of Sidonia for the first time a banqueting-room which could contain with convenience all the guests. It was a vast chamber of white marble, the golden panels of the walls containing festive sculptures by Schwanthaler, relieved by encaustic tinting. In its centre was a fountain, a group of Bacchantes encircling Dionysos; and from this fountain, as from a star, diverged the various tables from which sprang orange-trees in fruit and flower.

The banquet had but one fault; Coningsby was separated from Edith. The Duchess of Grand Cairo, the beautiful wife of the heir of one of the Imperial illustrations, had determined to appropriate Coningsby as her cavalier for the moment. Distracted, he made his escape; but his wandering eye could not find the

object of its search; and he fell prisoner to the charming Princesse de Petitpoix, a Carlist chieftain, whose witty words avenged the cause of fallen dynasties and a cashiered nobility.

Behold a scene brilliant in fancy, magnificent in splendour! All the circumstances of his life at this moment were such as acted forcibly on the imagination of Coningsby. Separated from Edith, he had still the delight of seeing her, the paragon of that bright company, the consummate being whom he adored! and who had spoken to him in a voice sweeter than a serenade, and had bestowed on him a glance softer than moonlight! The lord of the palace, more distinguished even for his capacity than his boundless treasure, was his chosen friend; gained under circumstances of romantic interest, when the reciprocal influence of their personal qualities was affected by no accessory knowledge of their worldly positions. He himself was in the very bloom of youth and health; the child of a noble house, rich for his present wants, and with a future of considerable fortunes. Entrancing love and dazzling friendship, a high ambition and the pride of knowledge, the consciousness of a great prosperity, the vague, daring energies of the high pulse of twenty-one, all combined to stimulate his sense of existence, which, as he looked around him at the beautiful objects and listened to the delicious sounds, seemed to him a dispensation of almost supernatural ecstasy.

About an hour after this, the ball-room still full, but the other saloons gradually emptying, Coningsby entered a chamber which seemed deserted. Yet he heard sounds, as it were, of earnest conversation. It was a voice that invited his progress; he advanced

another step, then suddenly stopped. There were two individuals in the room, by whom he was unnoticed. They were Sidonia and Miss Millbank. They were sitting on a sofa, Sidonia holding her hand and endeavouring, as it seemed, to soothe her. Her tones were tremulous; but the expression of her face was fond and confiding. It was all the work of a moment. Coningsby instantly withdrew, yet could not escape hearing an earnest request from Edith to her companion that he would write to her.

In a few seconds Coningsby had quitted the hotel of Sidonia, and the next day found him on his road to England.

CHAPTER LV.

Again at Cambridge.

T WAS one of those gorgeous and enduring sunsets that seemed to linger as if they wished to celebrate the mid-period of the year. Perhaps the beautiful hour of impending twilight never exercises a more effective influence on the soul than when it descends on the aspect of some distant and splendid city. What a contrast between the serenity and repose of our own bosoms and the fierce passions and destructive cares girt in the walls of that multitude whose domes and towers rise in purple lustre against the resplendent horizon!

And yet the disturbing emotions of existence and the bitter inheritance of humanity should exercise but a modified sway, and entail but a light burden, within the circle of the city into which the next scene of our history leads us. For it is the sacred city of study, of learning, and of faith; and the declining beam is resting on the dome of the Radcliffe, lingering on the towers of Christchurch and Magdalen, sanctifying the spires and pinnacles of holy St. Mary's.

A young Oxonian who had for some time been watching the city in the sunset, from a rising ground in its vicinity, lost, as it would seem, in meditation, suddenly rose, and looking at his watch, as if reminded of some engagement, hastened his return at a rapid pace. He reached the High Street as the Blenheim light post coach dashed up to the Star Hotel, with that brilliant precision which even the New Generation can remember, and yet which already ranks among the traditions of English manners. A peculiar and most animating spectacle used to be the arrival of a first-rate light coach in a country town! The small machine, crowded with so many passengers, the foaming and curvetting leaders, the wheelers more steady and glossy, as if they had not done their ten miles in the hour, the triumphant bugle of the guard, and the haughty routine with which the driver, as he reached his goal, threw his whip to the obedient ostlers in attendance; and, not least, the staring crowd, a little awestruck, and looking for the moment at the lowest official of the stable with considerable respect, altogether made a picture which one recollects with cheerfulness, and misses now in many a dreary market-town.

Our Oxonian was a young man about the middle height, and naturally of a thoughtful expression and rather reserved mien. The general character of his countenance was, indeed, a little stern, but it broke into an almost bewitching smile, and a blush suffused his face, as he sprang forward and welcomed an individual about the same age, who had jumped off the Blenheim.

'Well, Coningsby!' he exclaimed, extending both his hands.

'By Jove! my dear Millbank, we have met at last,' said his friend.

And here we must for a moment revert to what had occurred to Coningsby since he so suddenly quitted Paris at the beginning of the year. The wound he had received was deep to one unused to wounds. Yet, after all, none had outraged his feelings, no one had betrayed his hopes. He had loved one who had loved another. Misery, but scarcely humiliation. And yet 'tis a bitter pang under any circumstances to find another preferred to yourself. It is about the same blow as one would probably feel if falling from a balloon. Your Icarian flight melts into a grovelling existence, scarcely superior to that of a sponge or a coral, or redeemed only from utter insensibility by your frank detestation of your rival. It is quite impossible to conceal that Coningsby had imbibed for Sidonia a certain degree of aversion, which, in these days of exaggerated phrase, might even be described as hatred. And Edith was so beautiful! And there had seemed between them a sympathy so native and spontaneous, creating at once the charm of intimacy without any of the disenchanting attributes that are occasionally its consequence. He would recall the tones of her voice, the expression of her soft dark eye, the airy spirit and frank graciousness, sometimes even the flattering blush, with which she had ever welcomed one of whom she had heard so long and so kindly. It seemed, to use a sweet and homely phrase, that they were made for each other; the circumstances of their mutual destinies might have combined into one enchanting fate.

And yet, had she accorded him that peerless boon, her heart, with what aspect was he to communicate

this consummation of all his hopes to his grandfather, ask Lord Monmouth for his blessing, and the gracious favour of an establishment for the daughter of his foe, of a man whose name was never mentioned except to cloud his visage? Ah! what was that mystery that connected the haughty house of Coningsby with the humble blood of the Lancashire manufacturer? Why was the portrait of his mother beneath the roof of Millbank? Coningsby had delicately touched upon the subject both with Edith and the Wallingers, but the result of his inquiries only involved the question in deeper gloom. Edith had none but maternal relatives: more than once she had mentioned this, and the Wallingers, on other occasions, had confirmed the remark. Coningsby had sometimes drawn the conversation to pictures, and he would remind her with playfulness of their first unconscious meeting in the gallery of the Rue Tronchet; then he remembered that Mr. Millbank was fond of pictures; then he recollected some specimens of Mr. Millbank's collection, and after touching on several which could not excite suspicion, he came to 'a portrait, a portrait of a lady; was it a portrait or an ideal countenance?'

Edith thought she had heard it was a portrait, but she was by no means certain, and most assuredly was quite unacquainted with the name of the original, if there were an original.

Coningsby addressed himself to the point with Sir Joseph. He inquired of the uncle explicitly whether he knew anything on the subject. Sir Joseph was of opinion that it was something that Millbank had somewhere 'picked up.' Millbank used often to 'pick up' pictures.

Disappointed in his love, Coningsby sought refuge in the excitement of study, and in the brooding imagination of an aspiring spirit. The softness of his heart seemed to have quitted him for ever. He recurred to his habitual reveries of political greatness and public distinction. And as it ever seemed to him that no preparation could be complete for the career which he planned for himself, he devoted himself with increased ardour to that digestion of knowledge which converts it into wisdom. His life at Cambridge was now a life of seclusion. With the exception of a few Eton friends, he avoided all society. And, indeed, his acquisitions during this term were such as few have equalled, and could only have been mastered by a mental discipline of a severe and exalted character. At the end of the term Coningsby took his degree, and in a few days was about to quit that university where, on the whole, he had passed three serene and happy years in the society of fond and faithful friends, and in ennobling pursuits. He had many plans for his impending movements, yet none of them very mature ones. Lord Vere wished Coningsby to visit his family in the north, and afterwards to go to Scotland together: Coningsby was more inclined to travel for a year. Amid this hesitation a circumstance occurred which decided him to adopt neither of these courses.

It was Commencement, and coming out of the quadrangle of St. John's, Coningsby came suddenly upon Sir Joseph and Lady Wallinger, who were visiting the marvels and rarities of the university. They were alone. Coningsby was a little embarrassed, for he could not forget the abrupt manner in which he had parted from them; but they greeted him with so

much cordiality that he instantly recovered himself, and, turning, became their companion. He hardly ventured to ask after Edith: at length, in a depressed tone and a hesitating manner, he inquired whether they had lately seen Miss Millbank. He was himself surprised at the extreme light-heartedness which came over him the moment he heard she was in England, at Millbank, with her family. He always very much liked Lady Wallinger, but this morning he hung over her like a lover, lavished on her unceasing and the most delicate attentions, seemed to exist only in the idea of making the Wallingers enjoy and understand Cambridge; no one else was to be their guide at any place or under any circumstances. He told them exactly what they were to see; how they were to see it; when they were to see it. He told them of things which nobody did see, but which they should. He insisted that Sir Joseph should dine with him in hall; Sir Joseph could not think of leaving Lady Wallinger; Lady Wallinger could not think of Sir Joseph missing an opportunity that might never offer again. Besides, they might both join her after dinner. Except to give her husband a dinner, Coningsby evidently intended never to leave her side.

And the next morning, the occasion favourable, being alone with the lady, Sir Joseph bustling about a carriage, Coningsby said suddenly, with a countenance a little disturbed, and in a low voice, 'I was pleased, I mean surprised, to hear that there was still a Miss Millbank; I thought by this time she might have borne another name?'

Lady Wallinger looked at him with an expression of some perplexity, and then said, 'Yes, Edith was much admired; but she need not be precipitate in

marrying. Marriage is for a woman *the* event. Edith is too precious to be carelessly bestowed.'

'But I understood,' said Coningsby, 'when I left Paris,' and here he became very confused, 'that Miss Millbank was engaged, on the point of marriage.'

'With whom?'

'Our friend Sidonia.'

'I am sure that Edith would never marry Monsieur de Sidonia, nor Monsieur de Sidonia, Edith. 'Tis a preposterous idea!' said Lady Wallinger.

'But he very much admired her?' said Coningsby with a searching eye.

'Possibly,' said Lady Wallinger; 'but he never even intimated his admiration.'

'But he was very attentive to Miss Millbank?'

'Not more than our intimate friendship authorised, and might expect.'

'You have known Sidonia a long time?'

'It was Monsieur de Sidonia's father who introduced us to the care of Mr. Wallinger,' said Lady Wallinger, 'and therefore I have ever entertained for his son a sincere regard. Besides, I look upon him as a compatriot. Recently he has been even more than usually kind to us, especially to Edith. While we were at Paris he recovered for her a great number of jewels which had been left to her by her uncle in Spain; and, what she prized infinitely more, the whole of her mother's correspondence which she maintained with this relative since her marriage. Nothing but the influence of Sidonia could have effected this. Therefore, of course, Edith is attached to him almost as much as I am. In short, he is our dearest friend; our counsellor in all our cares. But as for marrying him, the idea is ridiculous to those who

know Monsieur Sidonia. No earthly consideration would ever induce him to impair that purity of race on which he prides himself. Besides, there are other obvious objections which would render an alliance between him and my niece utterly impossible: Edith is quite as devoted to her religion as Monsieur Sidonia can be to his race.'

A ray of light flashed on the brain of Coningsby as Lady Wallinger said these words. The agitated interview, which never could be explained away, already appeared in quite a different point of view. He became pensive, remained silent, was relieved when Sir Joseph, whose return he had hitherto deprecated, reappeared. Coningsby learnt in the course of the day that the Wallingers were about to make, and immediately, a visit to Hellingsley; their first visit; indeed, this was the first year that Mr. Millbank had taken up his abode there. He did not much like the change of life, Sir Joseph told Coningsby, but Edith was delighted with Hellingsley, which Sir Joseph understood was a very distinguished place, with fine gardens, of which his niece was particularly fond.

When Coningsby returned to his rooms, those rooms which he was soon about to quit for ever, in arranging some papers preparatory to his removal, his eye lighted on a too-long unanswered letter of Oswald Millbank. Coningsby had often projected a visit to Oxford, which he much desired to make, but hitherto it had been impossible for him to effect it, except in the absence of Millbank; and he had frequently postponed it that he might combine his first visit to that famous seat of learning with one to his old schoolfellow and friend. Now that was practicable. And

immediately Coningsby wrote to apprise Millbank that he had taken his degree, was free, and prepared to pay to him immediately the long-projected visit. Three years and more had elapsed since they had quitted Eton. How much had happened in the interval! What new ideas, new feelings, vast and novel knowledge! Though they had not met, they were nevertheless familiar with the progress and improvement of each other's minds. Their suggestive correspondence was too valuable to both of them to have been otherwise than cherished. And now they were to meet on the eve of entering that world for which they had made so sedulous a preparation.

CHAPTER LVI.

The Meeting of Friends.

HERE are few things in life more interesting than an unrestrained interchange of ideas with a congenial spirit, and there are few things more rare. How very seldom do you encounter in the world a man of great abilities, acquirements, experience, who will unmask his mind, unbutton his brains, and pour forth in careless and picturesque phrase all the results of his studies and observation; his knowledge of men, books, and nature. On the contrary, if a man has by any chance what he conceives an original idea, he hoards it as if it were old gold; and rather avoids the subject with which he is most conversant, from fear that you may appropriate his best thoughts. One of the principal causes of our renowned dulness in conversation is our extreme intellectual jealousy. It must be admitted that in this respect authors, but especially poets, bear the palm. They never think they are sufficiently appreciated, and live in tremor lest a brother should distinguish himself. Artists have the repute of being nearly as bad. And as for a small rising politician, a clever speech by a supposed rival or suspected

candidate for office destroys his appetite and disturbs his slumbers.

One of the chief delights and benefits of travel is, that one is perpetually meeting men of great abilities, of original mind, and rare acquirements, who will converse without reserve. In these discourses the intellect makes daring leaps and marvellous advances. The tone that colours our after-life is often caught in these chance colloquies, and the bent given that shapes a career.

And yet perhaps there is no occasion when the heart is more open, the brain more quick, the memory more rich and happy, or the tongue more prompt and eloquent, than when two school-day friends, knit by every sympathy of intelligence and affection, meet at the close of their college careers, after a long separation, hesitating, as it were, on the verge of active life, and compare together their conclusions of the interval; impart to each other all their thoughts and secret plans and projects; high fancies and noble aspirations; glorious visions of personal fame and national regeneration.

Ah! why should such enthusiasm ever die! Life is too short to be little. Man is never so manly as when he feels deeply, acts boldly, and expresses himself with frankness and with fervour.

Most assuredly there never was a congress of friendship wherein more was said and felt than in this meeting, so long projected, and yet perhaps on the whole so happily procrastinated, between Coningsby and Millbank. In a moment they seemed as if they had never parted. Their faithful correspondence indeed had maintained the chain of sentiment unbroken. But details are only for conversation.

Each poured forth his mind without stint. Not an author that had influenced their taste or judgment but was canvassed and criticised; not a theory they had framed or a principle they had adopted that was not confessed. Often, with boyish glee still lingering with their earnest purpose, they shouted as they discovered that they had formed the same opinion or adopted the same conclusion. They talked all day and late into the night. They condensed into a week the poignant conclusions of three years of almost unbroken study. And one night, as they sat together in Millbank's rooms at Oriel, their conversation having for some time taken a political colour, Millbank said,

'Now tell me, Coningsby, exactly what you conceive to be the state of parties in this country; for it seems to me that if we penetrate the surface, the classification must be more simple than their many names would intimate.'

'The principle of the exclusive constitution of England having been conceded by the Acts of 1827–8–32,' said Coningsby, 'a party has arisen in the State who demand that the principle of political liberalism shall consequently be carried to its extent; which it appears to them is impossible without getting rid of the fragments of the old constitution that remain. This is the destructive party; a party with distinct and intelligible principles. They seek a specific for the evils of our social system in the general suffrage of the population.

'They are resisted by another party, who, having given up exclusion, would only embrace as much liberalism as is necessary for the moment; who, without any embarrassing promulgation of principles, wish

to keep things as they find them as long as they can, and then will manage them as they find them as well as they can; but as a party must have the semblance of principles, they take the names of the things that they have destroyed. Thus they are devoted to the prerogatives of the Crown, although in truth the Crown has been stripped of every one of its prerogatives; they affect a great veneration for the constitution in Church and State, though every one knows that the constitution in Church and State no longer exists; they are ready to stand or fall with the "independence of the Upper House of Parliament," though, in practice, they are perfectly aware that, with their sanction, "the Upper House" has abdicated its initiatory functions, and now serves only as a court of review of the legislation of the House of Commons. Whenever public opinion, which this party never attempts to form, to educate, or to lead, falls into some violent perplexity, passion, or caprice, this party yields without a struggle to the impulse, and, when the storm has passed, attempts to obstruct and obviate the logical and, ultimately, the inevitable results of the very measures they have themselves originated, or to which they have consented. This is the Conservative party.

'I care not whether men are called Whigs or Tories, Radicals or Chartists, or by what nickname a bustling and thoughtless race may designate themselves; but these two divisions comprehend at present the English nation.

'With regard to the first school, I for one have no faith in the remedial qualities of a government carried on by a neglected democracy, who, for three centuries, have received no education. What pros-

pect does it offer us of those high principles of conduct with which we have fed our imaginations and strengthened our will? I perceive none of the elements of government that should secure the happiness of a people and the greatness of a realm.

'But in my opinion, if democracy be combated only by conservatism, democracy must triumph, and at no distant date. This, then, is our position. The man who enters public life at this epoch has to choose between political infidelity and a destructive creed.'

'This, then,' said Millbank, 'is the dilemma to which we are brought by nearly two centuries of parliamentary monarchy and parliamentary church.'

''Tis true,' said Coningsby. 'We cannot conceal it from ourselves, that the first has made government detested, and the second religion disbelieved.'

'Many men in this country,' said Millbank, 'and especially in the class to which I belong, are reconciled to the contemplation of democracy; because they have accustomed themselves to believe that it is the only power by which we can sweep away those sectional privileges and interests that impede the intelligence and industry of the community.'

'And yet,' said Coningsby, 'the only way to terminate what, in the language of the present day, is called class legislation, is not to entrust power to classes. You would find a locofoco majority as much addicted to class legislation as a factitious aristocracy. The only power that has no class sympathy is the sovereign.'

'But suppose the case of an arbitrary sovereign, what would be your check against him?'

'The same as against an arbitrary Parliament.'

'But a Parliament is responsible.'

'To whom?'

'To their constituent body.'

'Suppose it was to vote itself perpetual?'

'But public opinion would prevent that.'

'And is public opinion of less influence on an individual than on a body?'

'But public opinion may be indifferent. A nation may be misled, may be corrupt.'

'If the nation that elects the Parliament be corrupt, the elected body will resemble it. The nation that is corrupt deserves to fall. But this only shows that there is something to be considered beyond forms of government, national character. And herein mainly should we repose our hopes. If a nation be led to aim at the good and the great, depend upon it, whatever be its form, the government will respond to its convictions and its sentiments.'

'Do you then declare against Parliamentary government?'

'Far from it: I look upon political change as the greatest of evils, for it comprehends all. But if we have no faith in the permanence of the existing settlement, if the very individuals who established it are, year after year, proposing their modifications or their reconstructions; so also, while we uphold what exists, ought we to prepare ourselves for the change we deem impending.

'Now I would not that either ourselves, or our fellow-citizens, should be taken unawares as in 1832, when the very men who opposed the Reform Bill offered contrary objections to it which destroyed each other, so ignorant were they of its real character, its historical causes, its political consequences. We should now so act that, when the occasion arrives, we

should clearly comprehend what we want, and have formed an opinion as to the best means by which that want can be supplied.

'For this purpose I would accustom the public mind to the contemplation of an existing though torpid power in the constitution, capable of removing our social grievances, were we to transfer to it those prerogatives which the Parliament has gradually usurped, and used in a manner which has produced the present material and moral disorganisation. The House of Commons is the house of a few; the Sovereign is the sovereign of all. The proper leader of the people is the individual who sits upon the throne.'

'Then you abjure the representative principle?'

'Why so? Representation is not necessarily, or even in a principal sense, Parliamentary. Parliament is not sitting at this moment, and yet the nation is represented in its highest as well as in its most minute interests. Not a grievance escapes notice and redress. I see in the newspaper this morning that a pedagogue has brutally chastised his pupil. It is a fact known over all England. We must not forget that a principle of government is reserved for our days that we shall not find in our Aristotles, or even in the forests of Tacitus, nor in our Saxon Witenagemotes, nor in our Plantagenet parliaments. Opinion is now supreme, and opinion speaks in print. The representation of the press is far more complete than the representation of Parliament. Parliamentary representation was the happy device of a ruder age, to which it was admirably adapted: an age of semi-civilisation, when there was a leading class in the community; but it exhibits many symptoms of desuetude. It is controlled by a system of representation

more vigorous and comprehensive; which absorbs its duties and fulfils them more efficiently, and in which discussion is pursued on fairer terms, and often with more depth and information.'

'And to what power would you entrust the function of taxation?'

'To some power that would employ it more discreetly than in creating our present amount of debt, and in establishing our present system of imposts.

'In a word, true wisdom lies in the policy that would effect its ends by the influence of opinion, and yet by the means of existing forms. Nevertheless, if we are forced to revolutions, let us propose to our consideration the idea of a free monarchy, established on fundamental laws, itself the apex of a vast pile of municipal and local government, ruling an educated people, represented by a free and intellectual press. Before such royal authority, supported by such a national opinion, the sectional anomalies of our country would disappear. Under such a system, where qualification would not be Parliamentary, but personal, even statesmen would be educated; we should have no more diplomatists who could not speak French, no more bishops ignorant of theology, no more generals-in-chief who never saw a field.

'Now there is a polity adapted to our laws, our institutions, our feelings, our manners, our traditions; a polity capable of great ends and appealing to high sentiments; a polity which, in my opinion, would render government an object of national affection, which would terminate sectional anomalies, assuage religious heats, and extinguish Chartism.'

'You said to me yesterday,' said Millbank after a pause, 'quoting the words of another, which you

adopted, that man was made to adore and to obey. Now you have shown to me the means by which you deem it possible that government might become no longer odious to the subject; you have shown how man may be induced to obey. But there are duties and interests for man beyond political obedience, and social comfort, and national greatness, higher interests and greater duties. How would you deal with their spiritual necessities? You think you can combat political infidelity in a nation by the principle of enlightened loyalty; how would you encounter religious infidelity in a state? By what means is the principle of profound reverence to be revived? How, in short, is man to be led to adore?'

'Ah! that is a subject which I have not forgotten,' replied Coningsby. 'I know from your letters how deeply it has engaged your thoughts. I confess to you that it has often filled mine with perplexity and depression. When we were at Eton, and both of us impregnated with the contrary prejudices in which we had been brought up, there was still between us one common ground of sympathy and trust; we reposed with confidence and affection in the bosom of our Church. Time and thought, with both of us, have only matured the spontaneous veneration of our boyhood. But time and thought have also shown me that the Church of our heart is not in a position, as regards the community, consonant with its original and essential character, or with the welfare of a nation.'

'The character of a Church is universality,' replied Millbank. 'Once the Church in this country was universal in principle and practice; when wedded to the State, it continued at least universal in principle, if not in practice. What is it now? All ties between

the State and the Church are abolished, except those which tend to its danger and degradation.

'What can be more anomalous than the present connection between State and Church? Every condition on which it was originally consented to has been cancelled. That original alliance was, in my view, an equal calamity for the nation and the Church; but, at least, it was an intelligible compact. Parliament, then consisting only of members of the Established Church, was, on ecclesiastical matters, a lay synod, and might, in some points of view, be esteemed a necessary portion of Church government. But you have effaced this exclusive character of Parliament; you have determined that a communion with the Established Church shall no longer be part of the qualification for sitting in the House of Commons. There is no reason, so far as the constitution avails, why every member of the House of Commons should not be a dissenter. But the whole power of the country is concentrated in the House of Commons. The House of Lords, even the monarch himself, has openly announced and confessed, within these ten years, that the will of the House of Commons is supreme. A single vote of the House of Commons, in 1832, made the Duke of Wellington declare, in the House of Lords, that he was obliged to abandon his sovereign in "the most difficult and distressing circumstances." The House of Commons is absolute. It is the State. *L'État c'est moi.* The House of Commons virtually appoints the bishops. A sectarian assembly appoints the bishops of the Established Church. They may appoint twenty Hoadleys. James II. was expelled the throne because he appointed a Roman Catholic to an Anglican see. A Parliament might do this to-

morrow with impunity. And this is the constitution in Church and State which Conservative dinners toast! The only consequences of the present union of Church and State are, that, on the side of the State, there is perpetual interference in ecclesiastical government, and on the side of the Church a sedulous avoidance of all those principles on which alone Church government can be established, and by the influence of which alone can the Church of England again become universal.'

'But it is urged that the State protects its revenues?'

'No ecclesiastical revenues should be safe that require protection. Modern history is a history of Church spoliation. And by whom? Not by the people; not by the democracy. No; it is the emperor, the king, the feudal baron, the court minion. The estate of the Church is the estate of the people, so long as the Church is governed on its real principles. The Church is the medium by which the despised and degraded classes assert the native equality of man, and vindicate the rights and power of intellect. It made, in the darkest hour of Norman rule, the son of a Saxon pedlar Primate of England, and placed Nicholas Breakspear, a Hertfordshire peasant, on the throne of the Cæsars. It would do as great things now, if it were divorced from the degrading and tyrannical connection that enchains it. You would have other sons of peasants Bishops of England, instead of men appointed to that sacred office solely because they were the needy scions of a factitious aristocracy; men of gross ignorance, profligate habits, and grinding extortion, who have disgraced the episcopal throne, and profaned the altar.'

'But surely you cannot justly extend such a description to the present bench?'

'Surely not: I speak of the past, of the past that has produced so much present evil. We live in decent times; frigid, latitudinarian, alarmed, decorous. A priest is scarcely deemed in our days a fit successor to the authors of the gospels, if he be not the editor of a Greek play; and he who follows St. Paul must now at least have been private tutor of some young nobleman who has taken a good degree! And then you are all astonished that the Church is not universal! Why! nothing but the indestructibleness of its principles, however feebly pursued, could have maintained even the disorganised body that still survives.

'And yet, my dear Coningsby, with all its past errors and all its present deficiencies, it is by the Church—I would have said until I listened to you to-night—by the Church alone that I see any chance of regenerating the national character. The parochial system, though shaken by the fatal poor-law, is still the most ancient, the most comprehensive, and the most popular institution of the country; the younger priests are, in general, men whose souls are awake to the high mission which they have to fulfil, and which their predecessors so neglected; there is, I think, a rising feeling in the community, that parliamentary intercourse in matters ecclesiastical has not tended either to the spiritual or the material elevation of the humbler orders. Divorce the Church from the State, and the spiritual power that struggled against the brute force of the dark ages, against tyrannical monarchs and barbarous barons, will struggle again in opposition to influences of a different form, but of a

similar tendency; equally selfish, equally insensible, equally barbarising. The priests of God are the tribunes of the people. O, ignorant! that with such a mission they should ever have cringed in the antechambers of ministers, or bowed before parliamentary committees!'

'The utilitarian system is dead,' said Coningsby. 'It has passed through the heaven of philosophy like a hailstorm, cold, noisy, sharp, and peppering, and it has melted away. And yet can we wonder that it found some success, when we consider the political ignorance and social torpor which it assailed? Anointed kings turned into chief magistrates, and therefore much overpaid; estates of the realm changed into parliaments of virtual representation, and therefore requiring real reform; holy Church transformed into national establishment, and therefore grumbled at by all the nation for whom it was not supported. What an inevitable harvest of sedition, radicalism, infidelity! I really think there is no society, however great its resources, that could long resist the united influences of chief magistrate, virtual representation, and Church establishment!'

'I have immense faith in the new generation,' said Millbank, eagerly.

'It is a holy thing to see a state saved by its youth,' said Coningsby; and then he added, in a tone of humility, if not of depression, 'But what a task! What a variety of qualities, what a combination of circumstances is requisite. What bright abilities and what noble patience! What confidence from the people, what favour from the Most High!'

'But He will favour us,' said Millbank. 'And I say to you as Nathan said unto David, "Thou art the

man!" You were our leader at Eton; the friends of your heart and boyhood still cling and cluster round you! they are all men whose position forces them into public life. It is a nucleus of honour, faith, and power. You have only to dare. And will you not dare? It is our privilege to live in an age when the career of the highest ambition is identified with the performance of the greatest good. Of the present epoch it may be truly said, "Who dares to be good, dares to be great."'

'Heaven is above all,' said Coningsby. 'The curtain of our fate is still undrawn. We are happy in our friends, dear Millbank, and whatever lights, we will stand together. For myself, I prefer fame to life; and yet, the consciousness of heroic deeds to the most wide-spread celebrity.'

CHAPTER LVII.

HELLINGSLEY.

THE beautiful light of summer had never shone on a scene and surrounding landscape which recalled happier images of English nature, and better recollections of English manners, than that to which we would now introduce our readers. One of those true old English Halls, now unhappily so rare, built in the time of the Tudors, and in its elaborate timber-framing and decorative woodwork indicating, perhaps, the scarcity of brick and stone at the period of its structure, as much as the grotesque genius of its fabricator, rose on a terrace surrounded by ancient and very formal gardens. The hall itself, during many generations, had been vigilantly and tastefully preserved by its proprietors. There was not a point which was not as fresh as if it had been renovated but yesterday. It stood a huge and strange blending of Grecian, Gothic, and Italian architecture, with a wild dash of the fantastic in addition. The lantern watch-towers of a baronial castle were placed in juxtaposition with Doric columns employed for chimneys, while under oriel windows might be observed Italian doorways

with Grecian pediments. Beyond the extensive gardens an avenue of Spanish chestnuts at each point of the compass approached the mansion, or led into a small park which was table-land, its limits opening on all sides to beautiful and extensive valleys, sparkling with cultivation, except at one point, where the river Darl formed the boundary of the domain, and then spread in many a winding through the rich country beyond.

Such was Hellingsley, the new home that Oswald Millbank was about to visit for the first time. Coningsby and himself had travelled together as far as Darlford, where their roads diverged, and they had separated with an engagement on the part of Coningsby to visit Hellingsley on the morrow. As they had travelled along, Coningsby had frequently led the conversation to domestic topics; gradually he had talked, and talked much of Edith. Without an obtrusive curiosity, he extracted, unconsciously to his companion, traits of her character and early days, which filled him with a wild and secret interest. The thought that in a few hours he was to meet her again infused into his being a degree of transport which the very necessity of repressing before his companion rendered more magical and thrilling. How often it happens in life that we have with a grave face to discourse of ordinary topics, while all the time our heart and memory are engrossed with some enchanting secret!

The castle of his grandfather presented a far different scene on the arrival of Coningsby from that which it had offered on his first visit. The Marquess had given him a formal permission to repair to it at his pleasure, and had instructed the steward accordingly. But he came without notice at a season of

the year when the absence of all sports made his arrival unexpected. The scattered and sauntering household roused themselves into action, and contemplated the conviction that it might be necessary to do some service for their wages. There was a stir in that vast sleepy castle. At last the steward was found, and came forward to welcome their young master, whose simple wants were limited to the rooms he had formerly occupied.

Coningsby reached the castle a little before sunset, almost the same hour that he had arrived there more than three years ago. How much had happened in the interval! Coningsby had already lived long enough to find interest in pondering over the past. That past too must inevitably exercise a great influence over his present. He recalled his morning drive with his grandfather, to the brink of that river which was the boundary between his own domain and Hellingsley. Who dwelt at Hellingsley now?

Restless, excited, not insensible to the difficulties, perhaps the dangers, of his position, yet full of an entrancing emotion in which all thoughts and feelings seemed to merge, Coningsby went forth into the fair gardens to muse over his love amid objects as beautiful. A rosy light hung over the rare shrubs and tall fantastic trees; while a rich yet darker tint suffused the distant woods. This euthanasia of the day exercises a strange influence on the hearts of those who love. Who has not felt it? Magical emotions that touch the immortal part!

But as for Coningsby, the mitigating hour that softens the heart made his spirit brave. Amid the ennobling sympathies of nature, the pursuits and purposes of worldy prudence and conventional advan-

tage subsided into their essential nothingness. He willed to blend his life and fate with a being beautiful as that nature that subdued him, and he felt in his own breast the intrinsic energies that in spite of all obstacles should mould such an imagination into reality.

He descended the slopes, now growing dimmer in the fleeting light, into the park. The stillness was almost supernatural; the jocund sounds of day had died, and the voices of the night had not commenced. His heart too was still. A sacred calm had succeeded to that distraction of emotion which had agitated him the whole day, while he had mused over his love and the infinite and insurmountable barriers that seemed to oppose his will. Now he felt one of those strong groundless convictions that are the inspirations of passion, that all would yield to him as to one holding an enchanted wand.

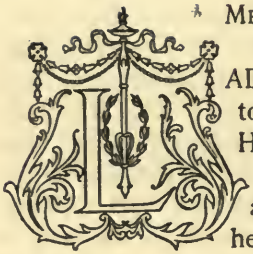
Onward he strolled; it seemed without purpose, yet always proceeding. A pale and then gleaming tint stole over the masses of mighty timber; and soon a glittering light flooded the lawns and glades. The moon was high in her summer heaven, and still Coningsby strolled on. He crossed the broad lawns, he traversed the bright glades: amid the gleaming and shadowy woods, he traced his prescient way.

He came to the bank of a rushing river, foaming in the moonlight, and wafting on its blue breast the shadow of a thousand stars.

'O river!' he said, 'that rollest to my mistress, bear her, bear her my heart!'

CHAPTER LVIII.

Memorable Hours.



ADY WALLINGER and Edith were together in the morning room of Hellingsley, the morrow after the arrival of Oswald. Edith was arranging flowers in a vase, while her aunt was embroidering a Spanish peasant in correct costume. The daughter of Millbank looked as bright and fragrant as the fair creations that surrounded her. Beautiful to watch her as she arranged their forms and composed their groups; to mark her eye glance with gratification at some happy combination of colour, or to listen to her delight as they wafted to her in gratitude their perfume. Oswald and Sir Joseph were surveying the stables; Mr. Millbank, who had been daily expected for the last week from the factories, had not yet arrived.

'I must say he gained my heart from the first,' said Lady Wallinger.

'I wish the gardener would send us more roses,' said Edith.

'He is so very superior to any young man I ever met,' continued Lady Wallinger.

'I think we must have this vase entirely of roses; don't you think so, aunt?' inquired her niece.

'I am fond of roses,' said Lady Wallinger. 'What beautiful bouquets Mr. Coningsby gave us at Paris, Edith!'

'Beautiful!'

'I must say, I was very happy when I met Mr. Coningsby again at Cambridge,' said Lady Wallinger. 'It gave me much greater pleasure than seeing any of the colleges.'

'How delighted Oswald seems at having Mr. Coningsby for a companion again!' said Edith.

'And very naturally,' said Lady Wallinger. 'Oswald ought to deem himself fortunate in having such a friend. I am sure the kindness of Mr. Coningsby when we met him at Cambridge is what I never shall forget. But he always was my favourite from the first time I saw him at Paris. Do you know, Edith, I liked him best of all your admirers.'

'Oh! no, aunt,' said Edith, smiling, 'not more than Lord Beaumanoir; you forget your great favourite, Lord Beaumanoir.'

'But I did not know Mr. Coningsby at Rome,' said Lady Wallinger; 'I cannot agree that anybody is equal to Mr. Coningsby. I cannot tell you how pleased I am that he is our neighbour!'

As Lady Wallinger gave a finishing stroke to the jacket of her Andalusian, Edith, vividly blushing, yet speaking in a voice of affected calmness, said,

'Here is Mr. Coningsby, aunt.'

And, truly, at this moment our hero might be discerned, approaching the hall by one of the avenues; and in a few minutes there was a ringing of the hall bell, and then, after a short pause, the servants an-

nounced Mr. Coningsby, and ushered him into the morning room.

Edith was embarrassed; the frankness and the gaiety of her manner had deserted her; Coningsby was rather earnest than self-possessed. Each felt at first that the presence of Lady Wallinger was a relief. The ordinary topics of conversation were in sufficient plenty; reminiscences of Paris, impressions of Hellingsley, his visit to Oxford, Lady Wallinger's visit to Cambridge. In ten minutes their voices seemed to sound to each other as they did in the Rue de Rivoli, and their mutual perplexity had in a great degree subsided.

Oswald and Sir Joseph now entered the room, and the conversation became general. Hellingsley was the subject on which Coningsby dwelt; he was charmed with all that he had seen! wished to see more. Sir Joseph was quite prepared to accompany him; but Lady Wallinger, who seemed to read Coningsby's wishes in his eyes, proposed that the inspection should be general; and in the course of half an hour Coningsby was walking by the side of Edith, and sympathising with all the natural charms to which her quick taste and lively expression called his notice and appreciation. Few things more delightful than a country ramble with a sweet companion! Exploring woods, wandering over green commons, loitering in shady lanes, resting on rural stiles; the air full of perfume, the heart full of bliss!

It seemed to Coningsby that he had never been happy before. A thrilling joy pervaded his being. He could have sung like a bird. His heart was as sunny as the summer scene. Past and Future were absorbed in the flowing hour; not an allusion to

Paris, not a speculation on what might arrive; but infinite expressions of agreement, sympathy; a multitude of slight phrases, that, however couched, had but one meaning, congeniality. He felt each moment his voice becoming more tender; his heart gushing in soft expressions; each moment he was more fascinated; her step was grace, her glance was beauty. Now she touched him by some phrase of sweet simplicity; or carried him spell-bound by her airy merriment.

Oswald assumed that Coningsby remained to dine with them. There was not even the ceremony of invitation. Coningsby could not but remember his dinner at Millbank, and the timid hostess whom he then addressed so often in vain, as he gazed upon the bewitching and accomplished woman whom he now passionately loved. It was a most agreeable dinner. Oswald, happy in his friend being his guest, under his own roof, indulged in unwonted gaiety.

The ladies withdrew; Sir Joseph began to talk politics, although the young men had threatened their fair companions immediately to follow them. This was the period of the Bed-Chamber Plot, when Sir Robert Peel accepted and resigned power in the course of three days. Sir Joseph, who had originally made up his mind to support a Conservative government when he deemed it inevitable, had for the last month endeavoured to compensate for this trifling error by vindicating the conduct of his friends, and reprobating the behaviour of those who would deprive her Majesty of the 'friends-of-her-youth.' Sir Joseph was a most chivalrous champion of the 'friends-of-her-youth' principle. Sir Joseph, who was always moderate and conciliatory in his talk, though he

would go, at any time, any lengths for his party, expressed himself to-day with extreme sobriety, as he was determined not to hurt the feelings of Mr. Coningsby, and he principally confined himself to urging temperate questions, somewhat in the following fashion:—

'I admit that, on the whole, under ordinary circumstances, it would perhaps have been more convenient that these appointments should have remained with Sir Robert; but don't you think that, under the peculiar circumstances, being friends of her Majesty's youth?' &c., &c.

Sir Joseph was extremely astonished when Coningsby replied that he thought, under no circumstances, should any appointment in the Royal Household be dependent on the voice of the House of Commons, though he was far from admiring the 'friends-of-her-youth' principle, which he looked upon as impertinent.

'But surely,' said Sir Joseph, 'the Minister being responsible to Parliament, it must follow that all great offices of State should be filled at his discretion.'

'But where do you find this principle of Ministerial responsibility?' inquired Coningsby.

'And is not a Minister responsible to his Sovereign?' inquired Millbank.

Sir Joseph seemed a little confused. He had always heard that Ministers were responsible to Parliament; and he had a vague conviction, notwithstanding the reanimating loyalty of the Bed-Chamber Plot, that the Sovereign of England was a nonentity. He took refuge in indefinite expressions, and observed, 'The Responsibility of Ministers is surely a constitutional doctrine.'

'The Ministers of the Crown are responsible to their master; they are not the Ministers of Parliament.'

'But then you know virtually,' said Sir Joseph, 'the Parliament, that is, the House of Commons, governs the country.'

'It did before 1832,' said Coningsby; 'but that is all past now. We got rid of that with the Venetian Constitution.'

'The Venetian Constitution!' said Sir Joseph.

'To be sure,' said Millbank. 'We were governed in this country by the Venetian Constitution from the accession of the House of Hanover. But that yoke is past. And now I hope we are in a state of transition from the Italian dogeship to the English monarchy.'

'Kings, Lords, and Commons, the Venetian Constitution!' exclaimed Sir Joseph.

'But they were phrases,' said Coningsby, 'not facts. The King was a doge; the Cabinet the Council of Ten. Your Parliament, that you call Lords and Commons, was nothing more than the Great Council of Nobles.'

'The resemblance was complete,' said Millbank, 'and no wonder, for it was not accidental; the Venetian Constitution was intentionally copied.'

'We should have had the Venetian Republic in 1640,' said Coningsby, 'had it not been for the Puritans. Geneva beat Venice.'

'I am sure these ideas are not very generally known,' said Sir Joseph, bewildered.

'Because you have had your history written by the Venetian party,' said Coningsby, 'and it has been their interest to conceal them.'

'I will venture to say that there are very few men on our side in the House of Commons,' said Sir Joseph, 'who are aware that they were born under a Venetian Constitution.'

'Let us go to the ladies,' said Millbank, smiling.

Edith was reading a letter as they entered.

'A letter from papa,' she exclaimed, looking up at her brother with great animation. 'We may expect him every day; and yet, alas! he cannot fix one.'

They now all spoke of Millbank, and Coningsby was happy that he was familiar with the scene. At length he ventured to say to Edith, 'You once made me a promise which you never fulfilled. I shall claim it to-night.'

'And what can that be?'

'The song that you promised me at Millbank more than three years ago.'

'Your memory is good.'

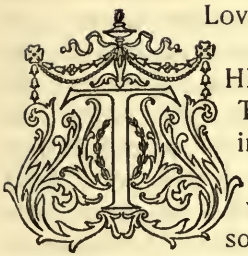
'It has dwelt upon the subject.'

Then they spoke for awhile of other recollections, and then Coningsby appealing to Lady Wallinger for her influence, Edith rose and took up her guitar. Her voice was rich and sweet; the air she sang gay, even fantastically frolic, such as the girls of Granada chaunt trooping home from some country festival; her soft, dark eye brightened with joyous sympathy; and ever and anon, with an arch grace, she beat the guitar, in chorus, with her pretty hand.

The moon wanes; and Coningsby must leave these enchanted halls. Oswald walked homeward with him until he reached the domain of his grandfather. Then mounting his horse, Coningsby bade his friend farewell till the morrow, and made his best way to the Castle.

CHAPTER LIX.

Love's Young Dream.



HERE is a romance in every life. The emblazoned page of Coningsby's existence was now open. It had been prosperous before, with some moments of excitement, some of delight; but they had all found, as it were, their origin in worldly considerations, or been inevitably mixed up with them. At Paris, for example, he loved, or thought he loved. But there not an hour could elapse without his meeting some person, or hearing something, which disturbed the beauty of his emotions, or broke his spell-bound thoughts. There was his grandfather hating the Millbanks, or Sidonia loving them; and common people, in the common world, making common observations on them; asking who they were, or telling who they were; and brushing the bloom off all life's fresh delicious fancies with their coarse handling.

But now his feelings were ethereal. He loved passionately, and he loved in a scene and in a society as sweet, as pure, and as refined as his imagination and his heart. There was no malicious gossip, no callous chatter to profane his ear and desecrate his sentiment. All that he heard or saw was worthy of

the summer sky, the still green woods, the gushing river, the gardens and terraces, the stately and fantastic dwellings, among which his life now glided as in some dainty and gorgeous masque.

All the soft, social, domestic sympathies of his nature, which, however abundant, had never been cultivated, were developed by the life he was now leading. It was not merely that he lived in the constant presence, and under the constant influence of one whom he adored, that made him so happy. He was surrounded by beings who found felicity in the interchange of kind feelings and kind words, in the cultivation of happy talents and refined tastes, and the enjoyment of a life which their own good sense and their own good hearts made them both comprehend and appreciate. Ambition lost much of its splendour, even his lofty aspirations something of their hallowing impulse of paramount duty, when Coningsby felt how much ennobling delight was consistent with the seclusion of a private station; and mused over an existence to be passed amid woods and waterfalls with a fair hand locked in his, or surrounded by his friends in some ancestral hall.

The morning after his first visit to Hellingsley Coningsby rejoined his friends, as he had promised Oswald at their breakfast-table; and day after day he came with the early sun, and left them only when the late moon silvered the keep of Coningsby Castle. Mr. Millbank, who wrote daily, and was daily to be expected, did not arrive. A week, a week of unbroken bliss, had vanished away, passed in long rides and longer walks, sunset saunterings, and sometimes moonlit strolls; talking of flowers, and thinking of things even sweeter; listening to delicious songs, and

sometimes reading aloud some bright romance or some inspiring lay.

One day Coningsby, who arrived at the hall unexpectedly late — indeed it was some hours past noon, for he had been detained by despatches which arrived at the Castle from Mr. Rigby, and which required his interposition — found the ladies alone, and was told that Sir Joseph and Oswald were at the fishing-cottage where they wished him to join them. He was in no haste to do this; and Lady Wallinger proposed that when they felt inclined to ramble they should all walk down to the fishing-cottage together. So, seating himself by the side of Edith, who was tinting a sketch which she had made of a rich oriel of Hellingsley, the morning passed away in that slight and yet subtle talk in which a lover delights, and in which, while asking a thousand questions that seem at the first glance sufficiently trifling, he is indeed often conveying a meaning that is not expressed, or attempting to discover a feeling that is hidden. And these are occasions when glances meet and glances are withdrawn: the tongue may speak idly, the eye is more eloquent, and often more true.

Coningsby looked up; Lady Wallinger, who had more than once announced that she was going to put on her bonnet, was gone. Still he continued to talk trifles; and still Edith listened.

'Of all that you have told me,' said Edith, 'nothing pleases me so much as your description of St. Geneviève. How much I should like to catch the deer at sunset on the heights! What a pretty drawing it would make!'

'You would like Eustace Lyle,' said Coningsby. 'He is so shy and yet so ardent.'

'You have such a band of friends! Oswald was saying this morning there was no one who had so many devoted friends.'

'We are all united by sympathy. It is the only bond of friendship; and yet friendship——'

'Edith,' said Lady Wallinger, looking into the room from the garden, with her bonnet on, 'you will find me roaming on the terrace.'

'We come, dear aunt.'

And yet they did not move. There were yet a few pencil touches to be given to the tinted sketch; Coningsby would cut the pencils.

'Would you give me,' he said, 'some slight memorial of Hellingsley and your art? I would not venture to hope for anything half so beautiful as this; but the slightest sketch. It would make me so happy when away to have it hanging in my room.'

A blush suffused the cheek of Edith; she turned her head a little aside, as if she were arranging some drawings. And then she said, in a somewhat hushed and hesitating voice,

'I am sure I will do so; and with pleasure. A view of the Hall itself; I think that would be the best memorial. Where shall we take it from? We will decide in our walk.' And she rose, and promising immediately to return, left the room.

Coningsby leant over the mantel-piece in deep abstraction, gazing vacantly on a miniature of the father of Edith. A light step roused him; she had returned. Unconsciously he greeted her with a glance of ineffable tenderness.

They went forth; it was a grey, suitry day. Indeed it was the covered sky which had led to the fishing scheme of the morning. Sir Joseph was an expert

and accomplished angler, and the Darl was renowned for its sport. They lingered before they reached the terrace where they were to find Lady Wallinger, observing the different points of view which the Hall presented, and debating which was to form the subject of Coningsby's drawing; for already it was to be not merely a sketch, but a drawing, the most finished that the bright and effective pencil of Edith could achieve. If it really were to be placed in his room, and were to be a memorial of Hellingsley, her artistic reputation demanded a masterpiece.

They reached the terrace: Lady Wallinger was not there, nor could they observe her in the vicinity. Coningsby was quite certain that she had gone onward to the fishing-cottage, and expected them to follow her; and he convinced Edith of the justness of his opinion. To the fishing-cottage, therefore, they bent their steps. They emerged from the gardens into the park, sauntering over the table land, and seeking as much as possible the shade, in the soft but oppressive atmosphere. At the limit of the table land their course lay by a wild but winding path through a gradual and wooded declivity. While they were yet in this craggy and romantic woodland, the big fervent drops began to fall. Coningsby urged Edith to seek at once a natural shelter; but she, who knew the country, assured him that the fishing-cottage was close by, and that they might reach it before the rain could do them any harm.

And truly, at this moment emerging from the wood, they found themselves in the valley of the Darl. The river here was narrow and winding, but full of life; rushing, and clear but for the dark sky it reflected; with high banks of turf and tall trees; the

silver birch, above all others, in clustering groups; infinitely picturesque. At the turn of the river, about two hundred yards distant, Coningsby observed the low, dark roof of the fishing-cottage on its banks. They descended from the woods to the margin of the stream by a flight of turfen steps, Coningsby holding Edith's hand as he guided her progress.

The drops became thicker. They reached, at a rapid pace, the cottage. The absent boat indicated that Sir Joseph and Oswald were on the river. The cottage was an old building of rustic logs, with a shelving roof, so that you might obtain sufficient shelter without entering its walls. Coningsby found a rough garden seat for Edith. The shower was now violent.

Nature, like man, sometimes weeps from gladness. It is the joy and tenderness of her heart that seek relief; and these are summer showers. In this instance the vehemence of her emotion was transient, though the tears kept stealing down her cheek for a long time, and gentle sighs and sobs might for some period be distinguished. The oppressive atmosphere had evaporated; the grey, sullen tint had disappeared; a soft breeze came dancing up the stream; a glowing light fell upon the woods and waters; the perfume of trees and flowers and herbs floated around. There was a carolling of birds; a hum of happy insects in the air; freshness and stir, and a sense of joyous life, pervaded all things; it seemed that the heart of all creation opened.

Coningsby, after repeatedly watching the shower with Edith, and speculating on its progress, which did not much annoy them, had seated himself on a log almost at her feet. And assuredly a maiden and a

youth more beautiful and engaging had seldom met before in a scene more fresh and fair. Edith on her rustic seat watched the now blue and foaming river, and the birch-trees with a livelier tint, and quivering in the sunset air; an expression of tranquil bliss suffused her beautiful brow, and spoke from the thrilling tenderness of her soft dark eye. Coningsby gazed on that countenance with a glance of entranced rapture. His cheek was flushed, his eye gleamed with dazzling lustre. She turned her head; she met that glance, and, troubled, she withdrew her own.

'Edith!' he said in a tone of tremulous passion, 'Let me call you Edith! Yes,' he continued, gently taking her hand, 'let me call you my Edith! I love you!'

She did not withdraw her hand; but turned away a face flushed as the impending twilight.

CHAPTER LX.

Embarrassment.

T WAS past the dinner hour when Edith and Coningsby reached the Hall; an embarrassing circumstance, but mitigated by the conviction that they had not to encounter a very critical inspection. What, then, were their feelings when the first servant that they met informed them that Mr. Millbank had arrived! Edith never could have believed that the return of her beloved father to his home could ever have been to her other than a cause of delight. And yet now she trembled when she heard the announcement. The mysteries of love were fast involving her existence. But this was not the season of meditation. Her heart was still agitated by the tremulous admission that she responded to that fervent and adoring love whose eloquent music still sounded in her ear, and the pictures of whose fanciful devotion flitted over her agitated vision. Unconsciously she pressed the arm of Coningsby as the servant spoke, and then, without looking into his face, whispering him to be quick, she sprang away.

As for Coningsby, notwithstanding the elation of his heart, and the ethereal joy which flowed in all his

veins, the name of Mr. Millbank sounded something like a knell. However, this was not the time to reflect. He obeyed the hint of Edith; made the most rapid toilet that ever was consummated by a happy lover, and in a few minutes entered the drawing-room of Hellingsley, to encounter the gentleman whom he hoped by some means or other, quite inconceivable, might some day be transformed into his father-in-law, and the fulfilment of his consequent duties towards whom he had commenced by keeping him waiting for dinner.

'How do you do, sir,' said Mr. Millbank, extending his hand to Coningsby. 'You seem to have taken a long walk.'

Coningsby looked round to the kind Lady Wallinger, and half addressed his murmured answer to her, explaining how they had lost her, and their way, and were caught in a storm or a shower, which, as it terminated about three hours back, and the fishing-cottage was little more than a mile from the Hall, very satisfactorily accounted for their not being in time for dinner.

Lady Wallinger then said something about the lowering clouds having frightened her from the terrace, and Sir Joseph and Oswald talked a little of their sport, and of their having seen an otter; but there was, or at least there seemed to Coningsby, a tone of general embarrassment which distressed him. The fact is, keeping people from dinner under any circumstances is distressing. They are obliged to talk at the very moment when they wish to use their powers of expression for a very different purpose. They are faint, and conversation makes them more exhausted. A gentleman, too, fond of his family, who

in turn are devoted to him, making a great and inconvenient effort to reach them by dinner time, to please and surprise them; and finding them all dispersed, dinner so late that he might have reached home in good time without any great inconvenient effort; his daughter, whom he had wished a thousand times to embrace, taking a singularly long ramble with no other companion than a young gentleman, whom he did not exactly expect to see; all these are circumstances, individually perhaps slight, and yet, encountered collectively, it may be doubted whether they would not a little ruffle even the sweetest temper.

Mr. Millbank, too, had not the sweetest temper, though not a bad one; a little quick and fiery. But then he had a kind heart. And when Edith, who had providentially sent down a message to order dinner, entered and embraced him at the very moment that dinner was announced, her father forgot everything in his joy in seeing her, and his pleasure in being surrounded by his friends. He gave his hand to Lady Wallinger, and Sir Joseph led away his niece. Coningsby put his arm around the neck of the astonished Oswald, as if they were once more in the playing fields of Eton.

'By Jove! my dear fellow,' he exclaimed, 'I am so sorry we kept your father from dinner.'

As Edith headed her father's table, according to his rigid rule, Coningsby was on one side of her. They never spoke so little; Coningsby would have never unclosed his lips, had he followed his humour. He was in a stupor of happiness; the dining room took the appearance of the fishing-cottage; and he saw nothing but the flowing river. Lady Wallinger

was however next to him, and that was a relief; for he felt always she was his friend. Sir Joseph, a good-hearted man, and on subjects with which he was acquainted full of sound sense, was invaluable to-day, for he entirely kept up the conversation, speaking of things which greatly interested Mr. Millbank. And so their host soon recovered his good temper; he addressed several times his observations to Coningsby, and was careful to take wine with him. On the whole, affairs went on flowingly enough. The gentlemen, indeed, stayed much longer over their wine than on the preceding days, and Coningsby did not venture on the liberty of quitting the room before his host. It was as well. Edith required repose. She tried to seek it on the bosom of her aunt, as she breathed to her the delicious secret of her life. When the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room the ladies were not there.

This rather disturbed Mr. Millbank again; he had not seen enough of his daughter; he wished to hear her sing. But Edith managed to reappear; and even to sing. Then Coningsby went up to her and asked her to sing the song of the girls of Granada. She said in a low voice, and with a fond yet serious look,

'I am not in the mood for such a song, but if you wish me——'

She sang it, and with inexpressible grace, and with an arch vivacity that to a fine observer would have singularly contrasted with the almost solemn and even troubled expression of her countenance a moment afterwards.

The day was about to die; the day the most important, the most precious in the lives of Harry Coningsby and Edith Millbank. Words had been spoken.

vows breathed, which were to influence their careers for ever. For them hereafter there was to be but one life, one destiny, one world. Each of them was still in such a state of tremulous excitement that neither had found time or occasion to ponder over the mighty result. They both required solitude; they both longed to be alone. Coningsby rose to depart. He pressed the soft hand of Edith, and his glance spoke his soul.

'We shall see you at breakfast to-morrow, Coningsby!' said Oswald, very loud, knowing that the presence of his father would make Coningsby hesitate about coming. Edith's heart fluttered; but she said nothing. It was with delight she heard her father, after a moment's pause, say,

'Oh! I beg we may have that pleasure.'

'Not quite at so early an hour,' said Coningsby; 'but if you will permit me, I hope to have the pleasure of hearing from you to-morrow, sir, that your journey has not fatigued you.'

CHAPTER LXI.

Love's Retrospection.

TO BE alone; to have no need of feigning a tranquillity he could not feel; of coining commonplace courtesy when his heart was gushing with rapture; this was a great relief to Coningsby, though gained by a separation from Edith.

The deed was done; he had breathed his long-brooding passion, he had received the sweet expression of her sympathy, he had gained the long-coveted heart. Youth, beauty, love, the innocence of unsophisticated breasts, and the inspiration of an exquisite nature, combined to fashion the spell that now entranced his life. He turned to gaze upon the moonlit towers and peaked roofs of Hellingsley. Silent and dreamlike, the picturesque pile rested on its broad terrace flooded with the silver light and surrounded by the quaint bowers of its fantastic gardens tipped with the glittering beam. Half hid in deep shadow, half sparkling in the midnight blaze, he recognised the oriel window that had been the subject of the morning's sketch. Almost he wished there should be some sound to assure him of his reality. But nothing broke the all-pervading stillness. Was his life to

be as bright and as tranquil? And what was to be his life?

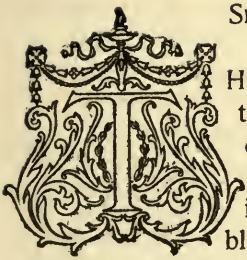
Whither was he to bear the beautiful bride he had gained? Were the portals of Coningsby the proud and hospitable gates that were to greet her? How long would they greet him after the achievement of the last four-and-twenty hours was known to their lord? Was this the return for the confiding kindness of his grandsire? That he should pledge his troth to the daughter of that grandsire's foe?

Away with such dark and scaring visions! Is it not the noon of a summer night fragrant with the breath of gardens, bright with the beam that lovers love, and soft with the breath of Ausonian breezes? Within that sweet and stately residence, dwells there not a maiden fair enough to revive chivalry; who is even now thinking of him as she leans on her pensive hand, or, if perchance she dream, recalls him in her visions? And himself, is he one who would cry craven with such a lot? What avail his golden youth, his high blood, his daring and devising spirit, and all his stores of wisdom, if they help not now? Does not he feel the energy divine that can confront Fate and carve out fortunes? Besides it is nigh Midsummer Eve, and what should fairies reign for but to aid such a bright pair as this?

He recalls a thousand times the scene, the moment, in which but a few hours past he dared to tell her that he loved; he recalls a thousand times the still, small voice, that murmured her agitated felicity: more than a thousand times, for his heart clenched the idea as a diver grasps a gem, he recalls the enraptured yet gentle embrace, that had sealed upon her blushing cheek his mystical and delicious sovereignty.

CHAPTER LXII.

Shattered Hopes.



HE morning broke lowering and thunderous; small white clouds, dull and immovable, studded the leaden sky; the waters of the rushing Darl seemed to have become black and almost stagnant; the terraces of Hellingsley looked like the hard lines of a model; and the mansion itself had a harsh and metallic character. Before the chief portal of his Hall, the elder Millbank, with an air of some anxiety, surveyed the landscape and the heavens, as if he were speculating on the destiny of the day.

Often his eye wandered over the park; often with an uneasy and restless step he paced the raised walk before him. The clock of Hellingsley church had given the chimes of noon. His son and Coningsby appeared at the end of one of the avenues. His eye lightened; his lip became compressed; he advanced to meet them.

'Are you going to fish to-day, Oswald?' he inquired of his son.

'We had some thoughts of it, sir.'

'A fine day for sport, I should think,' he observed, as he turned towards the Hall with them.

Coningsby remarked the fanciful beauty of the portal; its twisted columns, and Caryatides carved in dark oak.

'Yes, it's very well,' said Millbank; 'but I really do not know why I came here; my presence is an effort. Oswald does not care for the place; none of us do, I believe.'

'Oh! I like it now, father; and Edith doats on it.'

'She was very happy at Millbank,' said the father, rather sharply.

'We are all of us happy at Millbank,' said Oswald.

'I was much struck with the valley and the whole settlement when I first saw it,' said Coningsby.

'Suppose you go and see about the tackle, Oswald,' said Mr. Millbank, 'and Mr. Coningsby and I will take a stroll on the terrace in the meantime.'

The habit of obedience, which was supreme in this family, instantly carried Oswald away, though he was rather puzzled why his father should be so anxious about the preparation of the fishing-tackle, as he rarely used it. His son had no sooner departed than Mr. Millbank turned to Coningsby, and said very abruptly,

'You have never seen my own room here, Mr. Coningsby; step in, for I wish to say a word to you.' And thus speaking, he advanced before the astonished, and rather agitated Coningsby, and led the way through a door and long passage to a room of moderate dimensions, partly furnished as a library, and full of parliamentary papers and blue-books. Shutting the door with some earnestness and pointing to a chair, he begged his guest to be seated. Both in their chairs, Mr. Millbank, clearing his throat,

said without preface, 'I have reason to believe, Mr. Coningsby, that you are attached to my daughter?'

'I have been attached to her for a long time most ardently,' replied Coningsby, in a calm and rather measured tone, but looking very pale.

'And I have reason to believe that she returns your attachment?' said Mr. Millbank.

'I believe she deigns not to disregard it,' said Coningsby, his white cheek becoming scarlet.

'It is then a mutual attachment, which, if cherished, must produce mutual unhappiness,' said Mr. Millbank.

'I would fain believe the reverse,' said Coningsby.

'Why?' inquired Mr. Millbank.

'Because I believe she possesses every charm, quality, and virtue, that can bless man; and because, though I can make her no equivalent return, I have a heart, if I know myself, that would struggle to deserve her.'

'I know you to be a man of sense; I believe you to be a man of honour,' replied Mr. Millbank. 'As the first, you must feel that an union between you and my daughter is impossible; what, then, should be your duty as a man of correct principle is obvious.'

'I could conceive that our union might be attended with difficulties,' said Coningsby, in a somewhat deprecating tone.

'Sir, it is impossible,' repeated Mr. Millbank, interrupting him, though not with harshness; 'that is to say, there is no conceivable marriage which could be effected at greater sacrifices, and which would occasion greater misery.'

'The sacrifices are more apparent to me than the misery,' said Coningsby, 'and even they may be imaginary.'

'The sacrifices and the misery are certain and inseparable,' said Mr. Millbank. 'Come now, see how we stand! I speak without reserve, for this is a subject which cannot permit misconception, but with no feelings towards you, sir, but fair and friendly ones. You are the grandson of my Lord Monmouth; at present enjoying his favour, but dependent on his bounty. You may be the heir of his wealth to-morrow, and to-morrow you may be the object of his hatred and persecution. Your grandfather and myself are foes; bitter, irreclaimable, to the death. It is idle to mince phrases; I do not vindicate our mutual feelings, I may regret that they have ever arisen; I may regret it especially at this exigency. They are not the feelings of good Christians; they may be altogether to be deplored and unjustifiable; but they exist, mutually exist; and have not been confined to words. Lord Monmouth would crush me, had he the power, like a worm; and I have curbed his proud fortunes often. Were it not for this feeling I should not be here; I purchased this estate merely to annoy him, as I have done a thousand other acts merely for his discomfiture and mortification. In our long encounter I have done him infinitely more injury than he could do me; I have been on the spot, I am active, vigilant, the maker of my fortunes. He is an epicurean, continually in foreign parts, obliged to leave the fulfilment of his will to others. But, for these very reasons, his hate is more intense. I can afford to hate him less than he hates me; I have injured him more. Here are feelings to exist between human beings! But they do exist; and now you are to go to this man, and ask his sanction to marry my daughter!'

'But I would appease these hatreds; I would allay these dark passions, the origin of which I know not, but which never could justify the end, and which lead to so much misery. I would appeal to my grandfather; I would show him Edith.'

'He has looked upon as fair even as Edith,' said Mr. Millbank, rising suddenly from his seat, and pacing the room, 'and did that melt his heart? The experience of your own lot should have guarded you from the perils that you have so rashly meditated encountering, and the misery which you have been preparing for others besides yourself. Is my daughter to be treated like your mother? And by the same hand? Your mother's family were not Lord Monmouth's foes. They were simple and innocent people, free from all the bad passions of our nature, and ignorant of the world's ways. But because they were not noble, because they could trace no mystified descent from a foreign invader, or the sacrilegious minion of some spoliating despot, their daughter was hunted from the family which should have exulted to receive her, and the land of which she was the native ornament. Why should a happier lot await you than fell to your parents? You are in the same position as your father; you meditate the same act. The only difference being aggravating circumstances in your case, which, even if I were a member of the same order as my Lord Monmouth, would prevent the possibility of a prosperous union. Marry Edith, and you blast all the prospects of your life, and entail on her a sense of unceasing humiliation. Would you do this? Should I permit you to do this?'

Coningsby, with his head resting on his arm, his face a little shaded, his eyes fixed on the ground,

listened in silence. There was a pause; broken by Coningsby, as in a low voice, without changing his posture or raising his glance, he said, 'It seems, sir, that you were acquainted with my mother!'

'I knew sufficient of her,' replied Mr. Millbank, with a kindling cheek, 'to learn the misery that a woman may entail on herself by marrying out of her condition. I have bred my children in a respect for their class. I believe they have imbibed my feeling; though it is strange how in the commerce of the world, chance, in their friendships, has apparently baffled my designs.'

'Oh! do not say it is chance, sir,' said Coningsby, looking up, and speaking with much fervour. 'The feelings that animate me towards your family are not the feelings of chance: they are the creation of sympathy; tried by time, tested by thought. And must they perish? Can they perish? They were inevitable; they are indestructible. Yes, sir, it is in vain to speak of the enmities that are fostered between you and my grandfather; the love that exists between your daughter and myself is stronger than all your hatreds.'

'You speak like a young man, and a young man that is in love,' said Mr. Millbank. 'This is mere rhapsody; it will vanish in an instant before the reality of life. And you have arrived at that reality,' he continued, speaking with emphasis, leaning over the back of his chair, and looking steadily at Coningsby with his grey, sagacious eye; 'my daughter and yourself can meet no more.'

'It is impossible you can be so cruel!' exclaimed Coningsby.

'So kind; kind to you both; for I wish to be kind to you as well as to her. You are entitled to kind-

ness from us all; though I will tell you now, that, years ago, when the news arrived that my son's life had been saved, and had been saved by one who bore the name of Coningsby, I had a presentiment, great as was the blessing, that it might lead to unhappiness.'

'I can answer for the misery of one,' said Coningsby, in a tone of great despondency. 'I feel as if my sun were set. Oh! why should there be such wretchedness? Why are there family hatreds and party feuds? Why am I the most wretched of men?'

'My good young friend, you will live, I doubt not, to be a happy one. Happiness is not, as we are apt to fancy, entirely dependent on these contingencies. It is the lot of most men to endure what you are now suffering, and they can look back to such conjunctures through the vista of years with calmness.'

'I may see Edith now?'

'Frankly, I should say, no. My daughter is in her room; I have had some conversation with her. Of course she suffers not less than yourself. To see her again will only aggravate woe. You leave under this roof, sir, some sad memories, but no unkind ones. It is not likely that I can serve you, or that you may want my aid; but whatever may be in my power, remember you may command it; without reserve and without restraint. If I control myself now, it is not because I do not respect your affliction, but because, in the course of my life, I have felt too much not to be able to command my feelings.'

'You never could have felt what I feel now,' said Coningsby, in a tone of anguish.

'You touch on delicate ground,' said Millbank; 'yet from me you may learn to suffer. There was a

being once, not less fair than the peerless girl that you would fain call your own, and her heart was my proud possession. There were no family feuds to baffle our union, nor was I dependent on anything, but the energies which had already made me flourishing. What happiness was mine! It was the first dream of my life, and it was the last; my solitary passion, the memory of which softens my heart. Ah! you dreaming scholars, and fine gentlemen who saunter through life, you think there is no romance in the loves of a man who lives in the toil and turmoil of business. You are in deep error. Amid my career of travail, there was ever a bright form which animated exertion, inspired my invention, nerved my energy, and to gain whose heart and life I first made many of those discoveries, and entered into many of those speculations, that have since been the foundation of my wide prosperity.

'Her faith was pledged to me; I lived upon her image; the day was even talked of when I should bear her to the home that I had proudly prepared for her.

'There came a young noble, a warrior who had never seen war, glittering with gewgaws. He was quartered in the town where the mistress of my heart, and who was soon to share my life and my fortunes, resided. The tale is too bitter not to be brief. He saw her, he sighed; I will hope that he loved her; she gave him with rapture the heart which perhaps she found she had never given to me; and instead of bearing the name I had once hoped to have called her by, she pledged her faith at the altar to one who, like you, was called, CONINGSBY.'

'My mother!'

'You see, I too have had my griefs.'

'Dear sir,' said Coningsby, rising and taking Mr. Millbank's hand, 'I am most wretched; and yet I wish to part from you even with affection. You have explained circumstances that have long perplexed me. A curse, I fear, is on our families. I have not mind enough at this moment even to ponder on my situation. My head is a chaos. I go; yes, I quit this Hellingsley, where I came to be so happy, where I have been so happy. Nay, let me go, dear sir! I must be alone, I must try to think. And tell her—no, tell her nothing. God will guard over us!'

Proceeding down the avenue with a rapid and distempered step, his countenance, lost, as it were, in a wild abstraction, Coningsby encountered Oswald Millbank. He stopped, collected his turbulent thoughts, and throwing on Oswald one look that seemed at the same time to communicate woe and to demand sympathy, flung himself into his arms.

'My friend!' he exclaimed, and then added, in a broken voice, 'I need a friend.'

Then in a hurried, impassioned, and somewhat incoherent strain, leaning on Oswald's arm, as they walked on together, he poured forth all that had occurred, all of which he had dreamed; his baffled bliss, his actual despair. Alas! there was little room for solace, and yet all that earnest affection could inspire, and a sagacious brain and a brave spirit, were offered for his support, if not his consolation, by the friend who was devoted to him.

In the midst of this deep communion, teeming with every thought and sentiment that could enchain and absorb the spirit of man, they came to one of the park-gates of Coningsby. Millbank stopped. The command of his father was peremptory, that no mem-

ber of his family, under any circumstances, or for any consideration, should set his foot on that domain. Lady Wallinger had once wished to have seen the Castle, and Coningsby was only too happy in the prospect of escorting her and Edith over the place; but Oswald had then at once put his veto on the project, as a thing forbidden; and which, if put in practice, his father would never pardon. So it passed off, and now Oswald himself was at the gates of that very domain with his friend who was about to enter them, his friend whom he might never see again; that Coningsby who, from their boyish days, had been the idol of his life; whom he had lived to see appeal to his affections and his sympathy, and whom Oswald was now going to desert in the midst of his lonely and unsolaced woe.

'I ought not to enter here,' said Oswald, holding the hand of Coningsby as he hesitated to advance; 'and yet there are duties more sacred even than obedience to a father. I cannot leave you thus, friend of my best heart!'

The morning passed away in unceasing yet fruitless speculation on the future. One moment something was to happen, the next nothing could occur. Sometimes a beam of hope flashed over the fancy of Coningsby, and jumping up from the turf, on which they were reclining, he seemed to exult in his renovated energies; and then this sanguine paroxysm was succeeded by a fit of depression so dark and dejected that nothing but the presence of Oswald seemed to prevent Coningsby from flinging himself into the waters of the Darl.

The day was fast declining, and the inevitable moment of separation was at hand. Oswald wished

to appear at the dinner-table of Hellingsley, that no suspicion might arise in the mind of his father of his having accompanied Coningsby home. But just as he was beginning to mention the necessity of his departure, a flash of lightning seemed to transfix the heavens. The sky was very dark; though studded here and there with dingy spots. The young men sprang up at the same time.

'We had better get out of these trees,' said Oswald.

'We had better get to the Castle,' said Coningsby.

A clap of thunder that seemed to make the park quake broke over their heads, followed by some thick drops. The Castle was close at hand; Oswald had avoided entering it; but the impending storm was so menacing that, hurried on by Coningsby, he could make no resistance; and, in a few minutes, the companions were watching the tempest from the windows of a room in Coningsby Castle.

The fork-lightning flashed and scintillated from every quarter of the horizon: the thunder broke over the Castle, as if the keep were rocking with artillery: amid the momentary pauses of the explosion, the rain was heard descending like dissolving water-spouts.

Nor was this one of those transient tempests that often agitate the summer. Time advanced, and its fierceness was little mitigated. Sometimes there was a lull, though the violence of the rain never appeared to diminish; but then, as in some pitched fight between contending hosts, when the fervour of the field seems for a moment to allay, fresh squadrons arrive and renew the hottest strife, so a low moaning wind that was now at intervals faintly heard bore up a great reserve of electric vapour, that formed, as it

were, into field in the space between the Castle and Hellingsley, and then discharged its violence on that fated district.

Coningsby and Oswald exchanged looks. 'You must not think of going home at present, my dear fellow,' said the first. 'I am sure your father would not be displeased. There is not a being here who even knows you, and if they did, what then?'

The servant entered the room, and inquired whether the gentlemen were ready for dinner.

'By all means; come, my dear Millbank, I feel reckless as the tempest; let us drown our cares in wine!'

Coningsby, in fact, was exhausted by all the agitation of the day, and all the harassing spectres of the future. He found wine a momentary solace. He ordered the servants away, and for a moment felt a degree of wild satisfaction in the company of the brother of Edith.

Thus they sat for a long time, talking only of one subject, and repeating almost the same things, yet both felt happier in being together. Oswald had risen, and opening the window, examined the approaching night. The storm had lulled, though the rain still fell; in the west was a streak of light. In a quarter of an hour, he calculated on departing. As he was watching the wind he thought he heard the sound of wheels, which reminded him of Coningsby's promise to lend him a light carriage for his return.

They sat down once more; they had filled their glasses for the last time; to pledge to their faithful friendship, and the happiness of Coningsby and Edith; when the door of the room opened, and there appeared Mr. Rigby.

CHAPTER LXIII.

A Strange Rencontre.

T WAS the heart of the London season, nearly four years ago, twelve months having almost elapsed since the occurrence of those painful passages at Hellingsley which closed the last chapter of this history, and long lines of carriages an hour before midnight, up the classic mount of St. James and along Piccadilly, intimated that the world were received at some grand entertainment in Arlington Street.

It was the town mansion of the noble family beneath whose roof at Beaumanoir we have more than once introduced the reader, to gain whose courtyard was at this moment the object of emulous coachmen, and to enter whose saloons was to reward the martyr-like patience of their lords and ladies.

Among the fortunate who had already succeeded in bowing to their hostess were two gentlemen, who, ensconced in a good position, surveyed the scene, and made their observations on the passing guests. They were gentlemen who, to judge from their general air and the great consideration with which they were treated by those who were occasionally in their vi-

cinity, were personages whose criticism bore authority.

'I say, Jemmy,' said the elder, a dandy who had dined with the Regent, but who was still a dandy, and who enjoyed life almost as much as in the days when Carlton House occupied the terrace which still bears its name, 'I say, Jemmy, what a load of young fellows there are! Don't know their names at all. Begin to think fellows are younger than they used to be. Amazing load of young fellows, indeed!'

At this moment an individual who came under the fortunate designation of a young fellow, but whose assured carriage hardly intimated that this was his first season in London, came up to the junior of the two critics, and said, 'A pretty turn you played us yesterday at White's, Melton. We waited dinner nearly an hour.'

'My dear fellow, I am infinitely sorry; but I was obliged to go down to Windsor, and I missed the return train. A good dinner? Who had you?'

'A capital party, only you were wanted. We had Beaumanoir and Vere, and Jack Tufton and Spraggs.'

'Was Spraggs rich?'

'Wasn't he! I have not done laughing yet. He told us a story about the little Biron who was over here last year; I knew her at Paris; and an Indian screen. Killing! Get him to tell it you. The richest thing you ever heard!'

'Who's your friend?' inquired Mr. Melton's companion, as the young man moved away.

'Sir Charles Buckhurst.'

'A—h! That is Sir Charles Buckhurst. Glad to have seen him. They say he is going it.'

'He knows what he is about.'

'Egad! so they all do. A young fellow now of two or three and twenty knows the world as men used to do after as many years of scrapes. I wonder where there is such a thing as a greenhorn. Effie Crabbs says the reason he gives up his house is, that he has cleaned out the old generation, and that the new generation would clean him.'

'Buckhurst is not in that sort of way: he swears by Henry Sydney, a younger son of the Duke, whom you don't know; and young Coningsby; a sort of new set; new ideas and all that sort of thing. Beau tells me a good deal about it; and when I was staying with the Everinghams, at Easter, they were full of it. Coningsby had just returned from his travels, and they were quite on the *qui vive*. Lady Everingham is one of their set. I don't know what it is exactly; but I think we shall hear more of it.'

'A sort of animal magnetism, or unknown tongues, I take it from your description,' said his companion.

'Well, I don't know what it is,' said Mr. Melton; 'but it has got hold of all the young fellows who have just come out. Beau is a little bit himself. I had some idea of giving my mind to it, they made such a fuss about it at Everingham; but it requires a devilish deal of history, I believe, and all that sort of thing.'

'Ah! that's a bore,' said his companion. 'It is difficult to turn to with a new thing when you are not in the habit of it. I never could manage charades.'

Mr. Ormsby, passing by, stopped. 'They told me you had the gout, Cassilis?' he said to Mr. Melton's companion.

'So I had; but I have found out a fellow who

cures the gout instanter. Tom Needham sent him to me. A German fellow. Pumicestone pills; sort of a charm, I believe, and all that kind of thing: they say it rubs the gout out of you. I sent him to Luxborough, who was very bad; cured him directly. Luxborough swears by him.'

'Luxborough believes in the Millennium,' said Mr. Ormsby.

'But here's a new thing that Melton has been telling me of, that all the world is going to believe in,' said Mr. Cassilis, 'something patronised by Lady Everingham.'

'A very good patroness,' said Mr. Ormsby.

'Have you heard anything about it?' continued Mr. Cassilis. 'Young Coningsby brought it from abroad; didn't you say so, Jemmy?'

'No, no, my dear fellow; it is not at all that sort of thing.'

'But they say it requires a deuced deal of history,' continued Mr. Cassilis. 'One must brush up one's Goldsmith. Canterton used to be the fellow for history at White's. He was always boring one with William the Conqueror, Julius Cæsar, and all that sort of thing.'

'I tell you what,' said Mr. Ormsby, looking both sly and solemn, 'I should not be surprised if, some day or another, we have a history about Lady Everingham and young Coningsby.'

'Poh!' said Mr. Melton; 'he is engaged to be married to her sister, Lady Theresa.'

'The deuce!' said Mr. Ormsby; 'well, you are a friend of the family, and I suppose you know.'

'He is a devilish good-looking fellow, that young Coningsby,' said Mr. Cassilis. 'All the women are in

love with him, they say. Lady Eleanor Ducie quite raves about him.'

'By-the-bye, his grandfather has been very unwell,' said Mr. Ormsby, looking mysteriously.

'I saw Lady Monmouth here just now,' said Mr. Melton.

'Oh! he is quite well again,' said Mr. Ormsby.

'Got an odd story at White's that Lord Monmouth was going to separate from her,' said Mr. Cassilis.

'No foundation,' said Mr. Ormsby, shaking his head.

'They are not going to separate, I believe,' said Mr. Melton; 'but I rather think there was a foundation for the rumour.'

Mr. Ormsby still shook his head.

'Well,' continued Mr. Melton, 'all I know is, that it was looked upon last winter at Paris as a settled thing.'

'There was some story about some Hungarian,' said Mr. Cassilis.

'No, that blew over,' said Mr. Melton; 'it was Trautsmansdorff the row was about.'

All this time Mr. Ormsby, as the friend of Lord and Lady Monmouth, remained shaking his head; but as a member of society, and therefore delighting in small scandal, appropriating the gossip with the greatest avidity.

'I should think old Monmouth was not the sort of fellow to blow up a woman,' said Mr. Cassilis.

'Provided she would leave him quietly,' said Mr. Melton.

'Yes, Lord Monmouth never could live with a woman more than two years,' said Mr. Ormsby, pensively. 'And that I thought at the time rather an objection to his marriage.'

We must now briefly revert to what befell our hero after those unhappy occurrences in the midst of whose first woe we left him.

The day after the arrival of Mr. Rigby at the Castle, Coningsby quitted it for London, and before a week had elapsed had embarked for Cadiz. He felt a romantic interest in visiting the land to which Edith owed some blood, and in acquiring the language which he had often admired as she spoke it. A favourable opportunity permitted him in the autumn to visit Athens and the Ægean, which he much desired. In the pensive beauties of that delicate land, where perpetual autumn seems to reign, Coningsby found solace. There is something in the character of Grecian scenery which blends with the humour of the melancholy and the feelings of the sorrowful. Coningsby passed his winter at Rome. The wish of his grandfather had rendered it necessary for him to return to England somewhat abruptly. Lord Monmouth had not visited his native country since his marriage; but the period that had elapsed since that event had considerably improved the prospects of his party. The majority of the Whig Cabinet in the House of Commons by 1840 had become little more than nominal; and though it was circulated among their friends, as if from the highest authority, that 'one was enough,' there seemed daily a better chance of their being deprived even of that magical unit. For the first time in the history of this country since the introduction of the system of parliamentary sovereignty, the Government of England depended on the fate of single elections; and indeed, by a single vote, it is remarkable to observe, the fate of the Whig Government was ultimately decided.

This critical state of affairs, duly reported to Lord Monmouth, revived his political passions, and offered him that excitement which he was ever seeking, and yet for which he had often sighed. The Marquess, too, was weary of Paris. Every day he found it more difficult to be amused. Lucretia had lost her charm. He, from whom nothing could be concealed, perceived that often, while she elaborately attempted to divert him, her mind was wandering elsewhere. Lord Monmouth was quite superior to all petty jealousy and the vulgar feelings of inferior mortals, but his sublime selfishness required devotion. He had calculated that a wife or a mistress who might be in love with another man, however powerfully their interests might prompt them, could not be so agreeable or amusing to their friends and husbands as if they had no such distracting hold upon their hearts or their fancy. Latterly at Paris, while Lucretia became each day more involved in the vortex of society, where all admired and some adored her, Lord Monmouth fell into the easy habit of dining in his private rooms, sometimes tête-à-tête with Villebecque, whose inexhaustible tales and adventures about a kind of society which Lord Monmouth had always preferred infinitely to the polished and somewhat insipid circles in which he was born, had rendered him the primè favourite of his great patron. Sometimes Villebecque, too, brought a friend, male or otherwise, whom he thought invested with the rare faculty of distraction: Lord Monmouth cared not who or what they were, provided they were diverting.

Villebecque had written to Coningsby at Rome, by his grandfather's desire, to beg him to return to England and meet Lord Monmouth there. The letter was

couched with all the respect and good feeling which Villebecque really entertained for him whom he addressed; still a letter on such a subject from such a person was not agreeable to Coningsby, and his reply to it was direct to his grandfather; Lord Monmouth, however, had entirely given over writing letters.

Coningsby had met at Paris, on his way to England, Lord and Lady Everingham, and he had returned with them. This revival of an old acquaintance was both agreeable and fortunate for our hero. The vivacity of a clever and charming woman pleasantly disturbed the brooding memory of Coningsby. There is no mortification however keen, no misery however desperate, which the spirit of woman cannot in some degree lighten or alleviate. About, too, to make his formal entrance into the great world, he could not have secured a more valuable and accomplished female friend. She gave him every instruction, every intimation that was necessary; cleared the social difficulties which in some degree are experienced on their entrance into the world even by the most highly connected, unless they have this benign assistance; planted him immediately in the position which was expedient; took care that he was invited at once to the right houses; and, with the aid of her husband, that he should become a member of the right clubs.

'And who is to have the blue ribbon, Lord Eskdale?' said the Duchess to that nobleman, as he entered and approached to pay his respects.

'If I were Melbourne, I would keep it open,' replied his Lordship. 'It is a mistake to give away too quickly.'

'But suppose they go out,' said her Grace.

'Oh! there is always a last day to clear the House. But they will be in another year. The cliff will not be sapped before then. We made a mistake last year about the ladies.'

'I know you always thought so.'

'Quarrels about women are always a mistake. One should make it a rule to give up to them, and then they are sure to give up to us.'

'You have no great faith in our firmness?'

'Male firmness is very often obstinacy: women have always something better, worth all qualities; they have tact.'

'A compliment to the sex from so finished a critic as Lord Eskdale is appreciated.'

But at this moment the arrival of some guests terminated the conversation, and Lord Eskdale moved away, and approached a group which Lady Everingham was enlightening.

'My dear Lord Fitz-Booby,' her ladyship observed, 'in politics we require faith as well as in all other things.'

Lord Fitz-Booby looked rather perplexed; but, possessed of considerable official experience, having held high posts, some in the cabinet, for nearly a quarter of a century, he was too versed to acknowledge that he had not understood a single word that had been addressed to him for the last ten minutes. He looked on with the same grave, attentive stolidity, occasionally nodding his head, as he was wont of yore when he received a deputation on sugar duties or joint-stock banks, when he made, as was his custom when particularly perplexed, an occasional note on a sheet of foolscap paper.

'An opposition in an age of revolution,' continued Lady Everingham, 'must be founded on principles. It cannot depend on mere personal ability and party address taking advantage of circumstances. You have not enunciated a principle for the last ten years; and when you seemed on the point of acceding to power, it was not on a great question of national interest, but a technical dispute respecting the constitution of an exhausted sugar colony.'

'If you are a Conservative party, we wish to know what you want to conserve,' said Lord Vere.

'If it had not been for the Whig abolition of slavery,' said Lord Fitz-Booby, goaded into repartee, 'Jamaica would not have been an exhausted sugar colony.'

'Then what you do want to conserve is slavery?' said Lord Vere.

'No,' said Lord Fitz-Booby, 'I am never for retracing our steps.'

'But will you advance, will you move? And where will you advance, and how will you move?' said Lady Everingham.

'I think we have had quite enough of advancing,' said his lordship. 'I had no idea your ladyship was a member of the movement party,' he added, with a sarcastic grin.

'But if it were bad, Lord Fitz-Booby, to move where we are, as you and your friends have always maintained, how can you reconcile it to principle to remain there?' said Lord Vere.

'I would make the best of a bad bargain,' said Lord Fitz-Booby. 'With a Conservative government, a reformed Constitution would be less dangerous.'

'Why?' said Lady Everingham. 'What are your distinctive principles that render the peril less?'

'I appeal to Lord Eskdale,' said Lord Fitz-Booby; 'there is Lady Everingham turned quite a Radical, I declare. Is not your lordship of opinion that the country must be safer with a Conservative government than with a Liberal?'

'I think the country is always tolerably secure,' said Lord Eskdale.

Lady Theresa, leaning on the arm of Mr. Lyle, came up at this moment, and unconsciously made a diversion in favour of Lord Fitz-Booby.

'Pray, Theresa,' said Lady Everingham, 'where is Mr. Coningsby?'

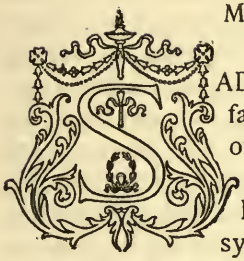
Let us endeavour to ascertain. It so happened that on this day Coningsby and Henry Sydney dined at Grillion's, at an university club, where, among many friends whom Coningsby had not met for a long time, and among delightful reminiscences, the unconscious hours stole on. It was late when they quitted Grillion's, and Coningsby's brougham was detained for a considerable time before its driver could insinuate himself into the line, which indeed he would never have succeeded in doing had not he fortunately come across the coachman of the Duke of Agincourt, who being of the same politics as himself, belonging to the same club, and always black-balling the same men, let him in from a legitimate party feeling; so they arrived in Arlington Street at a very late hour.

Coningsby was springing up the staircase, now not so crowded as it had been, and met a retiring party; he was about to say a passing word to a gentleman as he went by, when, suddenly, Coningsby turned deadly pale. The gentleman could hardly be

the cause, for it was the gracious and handsome presence of Lord Beaumanoir: the lady resting on his arm was Edith. They moved on while he was motionless; yet Edith and himself had exchanged glances. His was one of astonishment; but what was the expression of hers? She must have recognised him before he had observed her. She was collected, and she expressed the purpose of her mind in a distant and haughty recognition. Coningsby remained for a moment stupefied; then suddenly turning back, he bounded downstairs and hurried into the cloak-room. He met Lady Wallinger; he spoke rapidly, he held her hand, did not listen to her answers, his eyes wandered about. There were many persons present, at length he recognised Edith enveloped in her mantle. He went forward, he looked at her, as if he would have read her soul; he said something. She changed colour as he addressed her, but seemed instantly by an effort to rally and regain her equanimity; replied to his inquiries with extreme brevity, and Lady Wallinger's carriage being announced, moved away with the same slight haughty salute as before, on the arm of Lord Beaumanoir.

CHAPTER LXIV.

Misunderstandings.



ADNESS fell over the once happy family of Millbank after the departure of Coningsby from Hellingsley. When the first pang was over, Edith had found some solace in the sympathy of her aunt, who had always appreciated and admired Coningsby; but it was a sympathy which aspired only to soften sorrow, and not to create hope. But Lady Wallinger, though she lengthened her visit for the sake of her niece, in time quitted them; and then the name of Coningsby was never heard by Edith. Her brother, shortly after the sorrowful and abrupt departure of his friend, had gone to the factories, where he remained, and of which, in future, it was intended that he should assume the principal direction. Mr. Millbank himself, sustained at first by the society of his friend Sir Joseph, to whom he was attached, and occupied with daily reports from his establishments and the transaction of the affairs of his numerous and busy constituents, was for a while scarcely conscious of the alteration which had taken place in the demeanour of his daughter. But when they were once more alone together, it was impossible any longer to be blind to the great change.

That happy and equable gaiety of spirit, which seemed to spring from an innocent enjoyment of existence, and which had ever distinguished Edith, was wanting. Her sunny glance was gone. She was not indeed always moody and dispirited, but she was fitful, unequal in her tone. That temper whose sweetness had been a domestic proverb had become a little uncertain. Not that her affection for her father was diminished, but there were snatches of unusual irritability which momentarily escaped her, followed by bursts of tenderness that were the creatures of compunction. And often, after some hasty word, she would throw her arms round her father's neck with the fondness of remorse. She pursued her usual avocations, for she had really too well-regulated a mind, she was in truth a person of too strong an intellect, to neglect any source of occupation and distraction. Her flowers, her pencil, and her books supplied her with these; and music soothed, and at times beguiled, her agitated thoughts. But there was no joy in the house, and in time Mr. Millbank felt it.

Mr. Millbank was vexed, irritated, grieved. Edith, his Edith, the pride and delight of his existence, who had been to him only a source of exultation and felicity, was no longer happy, was perhaps pining away; and there was the appearance, the unjust appearance that he, her fond father, was the cause and occasion of all this wretchedness. It would appear that the name of Coningsby, to which he now owed a great debt of gratitude, was still doomed to bear him mortification and misery. Truly had the young man said that there was a curse upon their two families. And yet, on reflection, it still seemed to Mr. Millbank that he had acted with as much wisdom

and real kindness as decision. How otherwise was he to have acted? The union was impossible; the speedier their separation, therefore, clearly the better. Unfortunate, indeed, had been his absence from Hellingsley; unquestionably his presence might have prevented the catastrophe. Oswald should have hindered all this. And yet Mr. Millbank could not shut his eyes to the devotion of his son to Coningsby. He felt he could count on no assistance in this respect from that quarter. Yet how hard upon him that he should seem to figure as a despot or a tyrant to his own children, whom he loved, when he had absolutely acted in an inevitable manner! Edith seemed sad, Oswald sullen; all was changed. All the objects for which this clear-headed, strong-minded, kind-hearted man had been working all his life, seemed to be frustrated. And why? Because a young man had made love to his daughter who was really in no manner entitled to do so.

As the autumn drew on, Mr. Millbank found Hellingsley, under existing circumstances, extremely wearisome; and he proposed to his daughter that they should pay a visit to their earlier home. Edith assented without difficulty, but without interest. And yet, as Mr. Millbank immediately perceived, the change was a judicious one; for certainly the spirits of Edith seemed to improve after her return to their valley. There were more objects of interest: change, too, is always beneficial. If Mr. Millbank had been aware that Oswald had received a letter from Coningsby, written before he quitted Spain, perhaps he might have recognised a more satisfactory reason for the transient liveliness of his daughter which had so greatly gratified him.

About a month after Christmas, the meeting of Parliament summoned Mr. Millbank up to London; and he had wished Edith to accompany him. But London in February to Edith, without friends or connections, her father always occupied and absent from her day and night, seemed to them all, on reflection, to be a life not very conducive to health or cheerfulness, and therefore she remained with her brother. Oswald had heard from Coningsby again from Rome; but at the period he wrote he did not anticipate his return to England. His tone was affectionate, but dispirited.

Lady Wallinger went up to London after Easter for the season, and Mr. Millbank, now that there was a constant companion for his daughter, took a house and carried Edith back with him to London. Lady Wallinger, who had great wealth and great tact, had obtained by degrees a not inconsiderable position in society. She had a fine house in a fashionable situation, and gave profuse entertainments. The Whigs were under obligations to her husband, and the great Whig ladies were gratified to find in his wife a polished and pleasing person, to whom they could be courteous without any annoyance. So that Edith, under the auspices of her aunt, found herself at once in circles which otherwise she might not easily have entered, but which her beauty, grace, and experience of the most refined society of the Continent, qualified her to shine in. One evening they met the Marquess of Beaumanoir, their friend of Rome and Paris, and admirer of Edith, who from that time was seldom from their side. His mother, the Duchess, immediately called both on the Millbanks and the Wallingers; glad, not only to please her son, but to

express that consideration for Mr. Millbank which the Duke always wished to show. It was, however, of no use; nothing would induce Mr. Millbank ever to enter what he called aristocratic society. He liked the House of Commons; never paired off; never missed a moment of it; worked at committees all the morning, listened attentively to debates all the night; always dined at Bellamy's when there was a house; and when there was not, liked dining at the Fishmongers' Company, the Russia Company, great Emigration banquets, and other joint-stock festivities. That was his idea of rational society; business and pleasure combined; a good dinner, and good speeches afterwards.

Edith was aware that Coningsby had returned to England, for her brother had heard from him on his arrival; but Oswald had not heard since. A season in London only represented in the mind of Edith the chance, perhaps the certainty, of meeting Coningsby again; of communing together over the catastrophe of last summer; of soothing and solacing each other's unhappiness, and perhaps, with the sanguine imagination of youth, foreseeing a more felicitous future. She had been nearly a fortnight in town, and though moving frequently in the same circles as Coningsby, they had not yet met. It was one of those results which could rarely occur; but even chance enters too frequently in the league against lovers. The invitation to the assembly at —— House was therefore peculiarly gratifying to Edith, since she could scarcely doubt that if Coningsby were in town, which her casual inquiries of Lord Beaumanoir induced her to believe was the case, he would be present. Never, therefore, had she repaired to an assembly with such

a fluttering spirit; and yet there was a fascinating anxiety about it that bewilders the young heart.

In vain Edith surveyed the rooms to catch the form of that being whom for a moment she had never ceased to cherish and muse over. He was not there; and at the very moment when, disappointed and mortified, she most required solace, she learned from Mr. Melton that Lady Theresa Sydney, whom she chanced to admire, was going to be married, and to Mr. Coningsby!

What a revelation! His silence, perhaps his shunning of her was no longer inexplicable. What a return for all her romantic devotion in her sad solitude at Hellingsley. Was this the end of their twilight rambles, and the sweet pathos of their mutual loves? There seemed to be no truth in man, no joy in life! All the feelings that she had so generously lavished, all returned upon herself. She could have burst into a passion of tears and buried herself in a cloister.

Instead of that, civilisation made her listen with a serene though tortured countenance; but as soon as it was in her power, pleading a headache to Lady Wallinger, she effected, or thought she had effected, her escape from a scene which harrowed her heart.

As for Coningsby, he passed a sleepless night, agitated by the unexpected presence of Edith and distracted by the manner in which she had received him. To say that her appearance had revived all his passionate affection for her would convey an unjust impression of the nature of his feelings. His affection had never for a moment swerved; it was profound and firm. But unquestionably this sudden vision had brought before him, in startling and more vivid colours, the relations that subsisted between them. There was the being whom he loved and who loved

him; and whatever were the barriers which the circumstances of life placed against their union, they were partakers of the solemn sacrament of an unpolluted heart.

Coningsby, as we have mentioned, had signified to Oswald his return to England: he had hitherto omitted to write again; not because his spirit faltered, but he was wearied of whispering hope without foundation, and mourning over his chagrined fortunes. Once more in England, once more placed in communication with his grandfather, he felt with increased conviction the difficulties which surrounded him. The society of Lady Everingham and her sister, who had been the same time her visitor, had been a relaxation, and a beneficial one, to a mind suffering too much from the tension of one idea. But Coningsby had treated the matrimonial project of his gay-minded hostess with the courteous levity in which he believed it had at first half originated. He admired and liked Lady Theresa; but there was a reason why he could not marry her, even had his own heart not been absorbed by one of those passions from which men of deep and earnest character never emancipate themselves.

After musing and meditating again and again over everything that had occurred, Coningsby fell asleep when the morning had far advanced, resolved to rise when a little refreshed and find out Lady Wallinger, who, he felt sure, would receive him with kindness.

Yet it was fated that his step should not be taken, for while he was at breakfast, his servant brought him a letter from Monmouth House, apprising him that his grandfather wished to see him as soon as possible on urgent business.

CHAPTER LXV.

A Momentous Interview.

LORD MONMOUTH was sitting in the same dressing-room in which he was first introduced to the reader; on the table were several packets of papers that were open and in course of reference; and he dictated his observations to Monsieur Villebecque, who was writing at his left hand.

Thus were they occupied when Coningsby was ushered into the room.

'You see, Harry,' said Lord Monmouth, 'that I am much occupied to-day, yet the business on which I wish to communicate with you is so pressing that it could not be postponed.' He made a sign to Villebecque, and his secretary instantly retired.

'I was right in pressing your return to England,' continued Lord Monmouth to his grandson, who was a little anxious as to the impending communication, which he could not in any way anticipate. 'These are not times when young men should be out of sight. Your public career will commence immediately. The Government have resolved on a dissolution. My information is from the highest quarter.

You may be astonished, but it is a fact. They are going to dissolve their own House of Commons. Notwithstanding this, and the Queen's name, we can beat them; but the race requires the finest jockeying. We can't give a point. Tadpole has been here to me about Darlford; he came specially with a message, I may say an appeal, from one to whom I can refuse nothing; the Government count on the seat, though with the new Registration 'tis nearly a tie. If we had a good candidate we could win. But Rigby won't do. He is too much of the old clique; used up; a hack; besides, a beaten horse. We are assured the name of Coningsby would be a host; there is a considerable section who support the present fellow who will not vote against a Coningsby. They have thought of you as a fit person, and I have approved of the suggestion. You will, therefore, be the candidate for Darlford with my entire sanction and support, and I have no doubt you will be successful. You may be sure I shall spare nothing: and it will be very gratifying to me, after being robbed of all our boroughs, that the only Coningsby who cares to enter Parliament should nevertheless be able to do so as early as I could fairly desire.'

Coningsby the rival of Mr. Millbank on the hustings of Darlford! Vanquished or victorious, equally a catastrophe! The fierce passions, the gross insults, the hot blood and the cool lies, the ruffianism and the ribaldry, perhaps the domestic discomfiture and mortification, which he was about to be the means of bringing on the roof he loved best in the world, occurred to him with anguish. The countenance of Edith, haughty and mournful as last night, rose to him again. He saw her canvassing for her father,

and against him. Madness! And for what was he to make this terrible and costly sacrifice? For his ambition? Not even for that divinity or dæmon for which we all immolate so much! Mighty ambition, forsooth, to succeed to the Rigbys! To enter the House of Commons a slave and a tool; to move according to instructions, and to labour for the low designs of petty spirits without even the consolation of being a dupe. What sympathy could there exist between Coningsby and the 'great Conservative party,' that for ten years in an age of revolution had never promulgated a principle; whose only intelligible and consistent policy seemed to be an attempt, very grateful of course to the feelings of an English Royalist, to revive Irish Puritanism; who when in power in 1835 had used that power only to evince their utter ignorance of Church principles; and who were at this moment, when Coningsby was formally solicited to join their ranks, in open insurrection against the prerogatives of the English Monarchy?

'Do you anticipate, then, an immediate dissolution, sir?' inquired Coningsby after a moment's pause.

'We must anticipate it; though I think it doubtful. It may be next month; it may be in the autumn; they may tide over another year, as Lord Eskdale thinks, and his opinion always weighs with me. He is very safe. Tadpole believes they will dissolve at once. But whether they dissolve now, or in a month's time, or in the autumn, or next year, our course is clear. We must declare our intentions immediately. We must hoist our flag. Monday next there is a great Conservative dinner at Darlford. You must attend it; that will be the finest opportunity in the world for you to announce yourself.'

'Don't you think sir,' said Coningsby, 'that such an announcement would be rather premature? It is, in fact, embarking in a contest which may last a year; perhaps more.'

'What you say is very true,' said Lord Monmouth; 'no doubt it is very troublesome; very disgusting; any canvassing is. But we must take things as we find them. You cannot get into Parliament now in the good old gentlemanlike way; and we ought to be thankful that this interest has been fostered for our purpose.'

Coningsby looked on the carpet, cleared his throat as if about to speak, and then gave something like a sigh.

'I think you had better be off the day after to-morrow,' said Lord Monmouth. 'I have sent instructions to the steward to do all he can in so short a time, for I wish you to entertain the principal people.'

'You are most kind, you are always most kind to me, dear sir,' said Coningsby, in a hesitating tone, and with an air of great embarrassment, 'but, in truth, I have no wish to enter Parliament.'

'What?' said Lord Monmouth.

'I feel that I am not yet sufficiently prepared for so great a responsibility as a seat in the House of Commons,' said Coningsby.

'Responsibility!' said Lord Monmouth, smiling. 'What responsibility is there? How can any one have a more agreeable seat? The only person to whom you are responsible is your own relation, who brings you in. And I don't suppose there can be any difference on any point between us. You are certainly still young; but I was younger by nearly two years

when I first went in; and I found no difficulty. There can be no difficulty. All you have got to do is to vote with your party. As for speaking, if you have a talent that way, take my advice; don't be in a hurry. Learn to know the House; learn the House to know you. If a man be discreet, he cannot enter Parliament too soon.'

'It is not exactly that, sir,' said Coningsby.

'Then what is it, my dear Harry? You see to-day I have much to do; yet as your business is pressing, I would not postpone seeing you an hour. I thought you would have been very much gratified.'

'You mentioned that I had nothing to do but to vote with my party, sir,' replied Coningsby. 'You mean, of course, by that term what is understood by the Conservative party.'

'Of course; our friends.'

'I am sorry,' said Coningsby, rather pale, but speaking with firmness, 'I am sorry that I could not support the Conservative party.'

'By—!' exclaimed Lord Monmouth, starting in his seat, 'some woman has got hold of him, and made him a Whig!'

'No, my dear grandfather,' said Coningsby, scarcely able to repress a smile, serious as the interview was becoming, 'nothing of the kind, I assure you. No person can be more anti-Whig.'

'I don't know what you are driving at, sir,' said Lord Monmouth, in a hard, dry tone.

'I wish to be frank, sir,' said Coningsby, 'and am very sensible of your goodness in permitting me to speak to you on the subject. What I mean to say is, that I have for a long time looked upon the Con-

servative party as a body who have betrayed their trust; more from ignorance, I admit, than from design; yet clearly a body of individuals totally unequal to the exigencies of the epoch, and indeed unconscious of its real character.'

'You mean giving up those Irish corporations?' said Lord Monmouth. 'Well, between ourselves, I am quite of the same opinion. But we must mount higher; we must go to '28 for the real mischief. But what is the use of lamenting the past? Peel is the only man; suited to the times and all that; at least we must say so, and try to believe so; we can't go back. And it is our own fault that we have let the chief power out of the hands of our own order. It was never thought of in the time of your great-grandfather, sir. And if a commoner were for a season permitted to be the nominal Premier, to do the detail, there was always a secret committee of great 1688 nobles to give him his instructions.'

'I should be very sorry to see secret committees of great 1688 nobles again,' said Coningsby.

'Then what the devil do you want to see?' said Lord Monmouth.

'Political faith,' said Coningsby, 'instead of political infidelity.'

'Hem!' said Lord Monmouth.

'Before I support Conservative principles,' continued Coningsby, 'I merely wish to be informed what those principles aim to conserve. It would not appear to be the prerogative of the Crown, since the principal portion of a Conservative oration now is an invective against a late royal act which they describe as a Bed-chamber plot. Is it the Church which they wish to conserve? What is a threatened appropria-

tion clause against an actual Church commission in the hands of parliamentary laymen? Could the Long Parliament have done worse? Well, then, if it is neither the Crown nor the Church, whose rights and privileges this Conservative party propose to vindicate, is it your House, the House of Lords, whose powers they are prepared to uphold? Is it not notorious that the very man whom you have elected as your leader in that House, declares among his Conservative adherents that henceforth the assembly that used to furnish those very Committees of great revolution nobles that you mention, is to initiate nothing; and, without a struggle, is to subside into that undisturbed repose which resembles the Imperial tranquillity that secured the frontiers by paying tribute?'

'All this is vastly fine,' said Lord Monmouth; 'but I see no means by which I can attain my object but by supporting Peel. After all, what is the end of all parties and all politics? To gain your object. I want to turn our coronet into a ducal one, and to get your grandmother's barony called out of abeyance in your favour. It is impossible that Peel can refuse me. I have already purchased an ample estate with the view of entailing it on you and your issue. You will make a considerable alliance; you may marry, if you please, Lady Theresa Sydney. I hear the report with pleasure. Count on my entering at once into any arrangement conducive to your happiness.'

'My dear grandfather, you have ever been to me only too kind and generous.'

'To whom should I be kind but to you, my own blood, that has never crossed me, and of whom I have reason to be proud? Yes, Harry, it gratifies me to hear you admired and to learn your success. All

I want now is to see you in Parliament. A man should be in Parliament early. There is a sort of stiffness about every man, no matter what may be his talents, who enters Parliament late in life; and now, fortunately, the occasion offers. You will go down on Friday; feed the notabilities well; speak out; praise Peel; abuse O'Connell and the ladies of the Bed-chamber; anathematise all waverers; say a good deal about Ireland; stick to the Irish Registration Bill, that's a good card; and, above all, my dear Harry, don't spare that fellow Millbank. Remember, in turning him out you not only gain a vote for the Conservative cause and our coronet, but you crush my foe. Spare nothing for that object; I count on you, boy.'

'I should grieve to be backward in anything that concerned your interest or your honour, sir,' said Coningsby, with an air of great embarrassment.

'I am sure you would, I am sure you would,' said Lord Monmouth, in a tone of some kindness.

'And I feel at this moment,' continued Coningsby, 'that there is no personal sacrifice which I am not prepared to make for them, except one. My interests, my affections, they should not be placed in the balance, if yours, sir, were at stake, though there are circumstances which might involve me in a position of as much mental distress as a man could well endure; but I claim for my convictions, my dear grandfather, a generous tolerance.'

'I can't follow you, sir,' said Lord Monmouth, again in his hard tone. 'Our interests are inseparable, and therefore there can never be any sacrifice of conduct on your part. What you mean by sacrifice of affections, I don't comprehend; but as for your opin-

ions, you have no business to have any other than those I uphold. You are too young to form opinions.'

'I am sure I wish to express them with no unbecoming confidence,' replied Coningsby; 'I have never intruded them on your ear before; but this being an occasion when you yourself said, sir, I was about to commence my public career, I confess I thought it was my duty to be frank; I would not entail on myself long years of mortification by one of those ill-considered entrances into political life which so many public men have cause to deplore.'

'You go with your family, sir, like a gentleman; you are not to consider your opinions, like a philosopher or a political adventurer.'

'Yes, sir,' said Coningsby, with animation, 'but men going with their families like gentlemen, and losing sight of every principle on which the society of this country ought to be established, produced the Reform Bill.'

'D—— the Reform Bill!' said Lord Monmouth; 'if the Duke had not quarrelled with Lord Grey on a Coal Committee, we should never have had the Reform Bill. And Grey would have gone to Ireland.'

'You are in as great peril now as you were in 1830,' said Coningsby.

'No, no, no,' said Lord Monmouth; 'the Tory party is organised now; they will not catch us napping again: these Conservative Associations have done the business.'

'But what are they organised for?' said Coningsby. 'At the best to turn out the Whigs. And when you have turned out the Whigs, what then? You may get your ducal coronet, sir. But a duke now is not

so great a man as a baron was but a century back. We cannot struggle against the irresistible stream of circumstances. Power has left our order; this is not an age for factitious aristocracy. As for my grandmother's barony, I should look upon the termination of its abeyance in my favour as the act of my political extinction. What we want, sir, is not to fashion new dukes and furbish up old baronies, but to establish great principles which may maintain the realm and secure the happiness of the people. Let me see authority once more honoured; a solemn reverence again the habit of our lives; let me see property acknowledging, as in the old days of faith, that labour is his twin brother, and that the essence of all tenure is the performance of duty; let results such as these be brought about, and let me participate, however feebly, in the great fulfilment, and public life then indeed becomes a noble career, and a seat in Parliament an enviable distinction.'

'I tell you what it is, Harry,' said Lord Monmouth, very drily, 'members of this family may think as they like, but they must act as I please. You must go down on Friday to Darlford and declare yourself a candidate for the town, or I shall reconsider our mutual positions. I would say, you must go to-morrow; but it is only courteous to Rigby to give him a previous intimation of your movement. And that cannot be done to-day. I sent for Rigby this morning on other business which now occupies me, and find he is out of town. He will return to-morrow; and will be here at three o'clock, when you can meet him. You will meet him, I doubt not, like a man of sense,' added Lord Monmouth, looking at Coningsby with a glance such as he had never before encountered,

'who is not prepared to sacrifice all the objects of life for the pursuit of some fantastical puerilities.'

His Lordship rang a bell on his table for Villebecque; and to prevent any further conversation, resumed his papers.

CHAPTER LXVI.

The Cast of the Die.

IT WOULD have been difficult for any person, unconscious of crime, to have felt more dejected than Coningsby when he rode out of the courtyard of Monmouth House. The love of Edith would have consoled him for the destruction of his prosperity; the proud fulfilment of his ambition might in time have proved some compensation for his crushed affections; but his present position seemed to offer no single source of solace. There came over him that irresistible conviction that is at times the dark doom of all of us, that the bright period of our life is past; that a future awaits us only of anxiety, failure, mortification, despair; that none of our resplendent visions can ever be realised; and that we add but one more victim to the long and dreary catalogue of baffled aspirations.

Nor could he indeed by any combination see the means to extricate himself from the perils that were encompassing him. There was something about his grandfather that defied persuasion. Prone as eloquent youth generally is to believe in the resistless power of its appeals, Coningsby despaired at once of ever

moving Lord Monmouth. There had been a callous dryness in his manner, an unswerving purpose in his spirit, that at once baffled all attempts at influence. Nor could Coningsby forget the look he received when he quitted the room. There was no possibility of mistaking it; it said at once, without periphrasis, 'Cross my purpose, and I will crush you!'

This was the moment when the sympathy, if not the counsels, of friendship might have been grateful. A clever woman might have afforded even more than sympathy; some happy device that might have even released him from the mesh in which he was involved. And once Coningsby had turned his horse's head to Park Lane to call on Lady Everingham. But surely if there were a sacred secret in the world, it was the one which subsisted between himself and Edith. No, that must never be violated. Then there was Lady Wallinger; he could at least speak with freedom to her. He resolved to tell her all. He looked in for a moment at a club to take up the 'Court Guide' and find her direction. A few men were standing in a bow window. He heard Mr. Cassilis say,

'So Beau, they say, is booked at last; the new beauty, have you heard?'

'I saw him very sweet on her last night,' rejoined his companion. 'Has she any tin?'

'Deuced deal, they say,' replied Mr. Cassilis. 'The father is a cotton lord, and they all have loads of tin, you know. Nothing like them now.'

'He is in Parliament, is not he?'

''Gad, I believe he is,' said Mr. Cassilis; 'I never know who is in Parliament in these days. I remember when there were only ten men in the House of

Commons who were not either members of Brooks's or this place. Everything is so deuced changed.'

'I hear 'tis an old affair of Beau,' said another gentleman. 'It was all done a year ago at Rome or Paris.'

'They say she refused him then,' said Mr. Cassilis.

'Well, that is tolerably cool for a manufacturer's daughter,' said his friend. 'What next?'

'I wonder how the Duke likes it?' said Mr. Cassilis.

'Or the Duchess?' added one of his friends.

'Or the Everinghams?' added the other.

'The Duke will be deuced glad to see Beau settled, I take it,' said Mr. Cassilis.

'A good deal depends on the tin,' said his friend.

Coningsby threw down the 'Court Guide' with a sinking heart. In spite of every insuperable difficulty, hitherto the end and object of all his aspirations and all his exploits, sometimes even almost unconsciously to himself, was Edith. It was over. The strange manner of last night was fatally explained. The heart that once had been his was now another's. To the man who still loves there is in that conviction the most profound and desolate sorrow of which our nature is capable. All the recollection of the past, all the once-cherished prospects of the future, blend into one bewildering anguish. Coningsby quitted the club, and mounting his horse, rode rapidly out of town, almost unconscious of his direction. He found himself at length in a green lane near Willesden, silent and undisturbed; he pulled up his horse, and summoned all his mind to the contemplation of his prospects.

Edith was lost. Now, should he return to his grandfather, accept his mission, and go down to Darlford on Friday? Favour and fortune, power,

prosperity, rank, distinction would be the consequence of this step; might not he add even vengeance? Was there to be no term to his endurance? Might not he teach this proud, prejudiced manufacturer, with all his virulence and despotic caprices, a memorable lesson? And his daughter, too, this betrothed, after all, of a young noble, with her flush futurity of splendour and enjoyment, was she to hear of him only, if indeed she heard of him at all, as of one toiling or trifling in the humbler positions of existence; and wonder, with a blush, that he ever could have been the hero of her romantic girlhood? What degradation in the idea? His cheek burnt at the possibility of such ignominy!

It was a conjuncture in his life that required decision. He thought of his companions who looked up to him with such ardent anticipations of his fame, of delight in his career, and confidence in his leading; were all these high and fond fancies to be baulked? On the very threshold of life was he to blunder? 'Tis the first step that leads to all, and his was to be a wilful error. He remembered his first visit to his grandfather, and the delight of his friends at Eton at his report on his return. After eight years of initiation was he to lose that favour then so highly prized, when the results which they had so long counted on were on the very eve of accomplishment? Parliament and riches, and rank and power; these were facts, realities, substances, that none could mistake. Was he to sacrifice them for speculations, theories, shadows, perhaps the vapours of a green and conceited brain? No, by heaven, no! He was like Cæsar by the starry river's side, watching the image of the planets on its fatal waters. The die was cast.

The sun set; the twilight spell fell upon his soul; the exaltation of his spirit died away. Beautiful thoughts, full of sweetness and tranquillity and consolation, came clustering round his heart like seraphs. He thought of Edith in her hours of fondness; he thought of the pure and solemn moments when to mingle his name with the heroes of humanity was his aspiration, and to achieve immortal fame the inspiring purpose of his life. What were the tawdry accidents of vulgar ambition to him? No domestic despot could deprive him of his intellect, his knowledge, the sustaining power of an unpolluted conscience. If he possessed the intelligence in which he had confidence, the world would recognise his voice even if not placed upon a pedestal. If the principles of his philosophy were true, the great heart of the nation would respond to their expression. Coningsby felt at this moment a profound conviction which never again deserted him, that the conduct which would violate the affections of the heart, or the dictates of the conscience, however it may lead to immediate success, is a fatal error. Conscious that he was perhaps verging on some painful vicissitude of his life, he devoted himself to a love that seemed hopeless, and to a fame that was perhaps a dream.

It was under the influence of these solemn resolutions that he wrote, on his return home, a letter to Lord Monmouth, in which he expressed all that affection which he really felt for his grandfather, and all the pangs which it cost him to adhere to the conclusions he had already announced. In terms of tenderness, and even humility, he declined to become a candidate for Darlford, or even to enter Parliament, except as the master of his own conduct.

CHAPTER LXVII.

Rumours of a Quarrel.

LADY MONMOUTH was reclining on a sofa in that beautiful boudoir which had been fitted up under the superintendence of Mr. Rigby, but as he then believed for the Princess Colonna. The walls were hung with amber satin, painted by Delaroche with such subjects as might be expected from his brilliant and picturesque pencil. Fair forms, heroes and heroines in dazzling costume, the offspring of chivalry merging into what is commonly styled civilisation, moved in graceful or fantastic groups amid palaces and gardens. The ceiling, carved in the deep honeycomb fashion of the Saracens, was richly gilt and picked out in violet. Upon a violet carpet of velvet was represented the marriage of Cupid and Psyche.

It was about two hours after Coningsby had quitted Monmouth House, and Flora came in, sent for by Lady Monmouth as was her custom, to read to her as she was employed with some light work.

'Tis a new book of Suë,' said Lucretia. 'They say it is good.'

Flora, seated by her side, began to read. Reading was an accomplishment which distinguished Flora;

but to-day her voice faltered, her expression was uncertain; she seemed but imperfectly to comprehend her page. More than once Lady Monmouth looked round at her with an inquisitive glance. Suddenly Flora stopped and burst into tears.

'O! madam,' she at last exclaimed, 'if you would but speak to Mr. Coningsby, all might be right!'

'What is this?' said Lady Monmouth, turning quickly on the sofa; then, collecting herself in an instant, she continued with less abruptness, and more suavity than usual, 'Tell me, Flora, what is it; what is the matter?'

'My lord,' sobbed Flora, 'has quarrelled with Mr. Coningsby.'

An expression of eager interest came over the countenance of Lucretia.

'Why have they quarrelled?'

'I do not know they have quarrelled; it is not, perhaps, a right term; but my lord is very angry with Mr. Coningsby.'

'Not very angry, I should think, Flora; and about what?'

'Oh! very angry, madam,' said Flora, shaking her head mournfully. 'My lord told M. Villebecque that perhaps Mr. Coningsby would never enter the house again.'

'Was it to-day?' asked Lucretia.

'This morning. Mr. Coningsby has only left this hour or two. He will not do what my lord wishes, about some seat in the Chamber. I do not know exactly what it is; but my lord is in one of his moods of terror: my father is frightened even to go into his room when he is so.'

'Has Mr. Rigby been here to-day?' asked Lucretia.

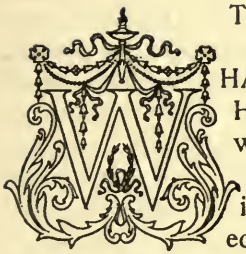
'Mr. Rigby is not in town. My father went for Mr. Rigby this morning before Mr. Coningsby came, and he found that Mr. Rigby was not in town. That is why I know it.'

Lady Monmouth rose from her sofa, and walked once or twice up and down the room. Then turning to Flora, she said, 'Go away now: the book is stupid; it does not amuse me. Stop: find out all you can for me about the quarrel before I speak to Mr. Coningsby.'

Flora quitted the room. Lucretia remained for some time in meditation; then she wrote a few lines, which she despatched at once to Mr. Rigby.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

The Blow Falls.



HAT a great man was the Right Honourable Nicholas Rigby! Here was one of the first peers of England, and one of the finest ladies in London, both waiting with equal anxiety his return to town; and unable to transact two affairs of vast importance, yet wholly unconnected, without his interposition! What was the secret of the influence of this man, confided in by everybody, trusted by none? His counsels were not deep, his expedients were not felicitous; he had no feeling, and he could create no sympathy. It is that, in most of the transactions of life, there is some portion which no one cares to accomplish, and which everybody wishes to be achieved. This was always the portion of Mr. Rigby. In the eye of the world he had constantly the appearance of being mixed up with high dealings, and negotiations and arrangements of fine management, whereas in truth, notwithstanding his splendid livery and the airs he gave himself in the servants' hall, his real business in life had ever been to do the dirty work.

Mr. Rigby had been shut up much at his villa of late. He was concocting, you could not term it com-

posing, an article, a 'very slashing article,' which was to prove that the penny postage must be the destruction of the aristocracy. It was a grand subject, treated in his highest style. His parallel portraits of Rowland Hill the conqueror of Almarez, and Rowland Hill the deviser of the cheap postage, was enormously fine. It was full of passages in italics, little words in great capitals, and almost drew tears. The statistical details also were highly interesting and novel. Several of the old postmen, both twopenny and general, who had been in office with himself, and who were inspired with an equal zeal against that spirit of reform of which they had alike been victims, supplied him with information which nothing but a breach of ministerial duty could have furnished. The prophetic peroration as to the irresistible progress of democracy was almost as powerful as one of Rigby's speeches on Aldborough or Amersham. There never was a fellow for giving a good hearty kick to the people like Rigby. Himself sprung from the dregs of the populace, this was disinterested. What could be more patriotic and magnanimous than his Jeremiads over the fall of the Montmorencis and the Crillons, or the possible catastrophe of the Percys and the Manners! The truth of all this hullabaloo was that Rigby had a sly pension which, by an inevitable association of ideas, he always connected with the maintenance of an aristocracy. All his rigmarole dissertations on the French Revolution were impelled by this secret influence; and when he wailed over *la guerre aux châteaux,* and moaned like a mandrake over Nottingham Castle in flames, the rogue had an eye all the while to quarter-day!

Arriving in town the day after Coningsby's inter-

view with his grandfather, Mr. Rigby found a summons to Monmouth House waiting him, and an urgent note from Lucretia begging that he would permit nothing to prevent him seeing her for a few minutes before he called on the Marquess.

Lucretia, acting on the unconscious intimation of Flora, had in the course of four-and-twenty hours obtained pretty ample and accurate details of the cause of contention between Coningsby and her husband. She could inform Mr. Rigby not only that Lord Monmouth was highly incensed against his grandson, but that the cause of their misunderstanding arose about a seat in the House of Commons, and that seat, too, the one which Mr. Rigby had long appropriated to himself, and over whose registration he had watched with such affectionate solicitude.

Lady Monmouth arranged this information like a first-rate artist, and gave it a grouping and a colour which produced the liveliest effect upon her confederate. The countenance of Rigby was almost ghastly as he received the intelligence: a grin, half of malice, half of terror, played over his features.

'I told you to beware of him long ago,' said Lady Monmouth. 'He is, he has ever been, in the way of both of us.'

'He is in my power,' said Rigby. 'We can crush him!'

'How?'

'He is in love with the daughter of Millbank, the man who bought Hellingsley.'

'Hah!' exclaimed Lady Monmouth, in a prolonged tone.

'He was at Coningsby all last summer, hanging about her. I found the younger Millbank quite domi-

ciliated at the Castle; a fact which, of itself, if known to Lord Monmouth, would ensure the lad's annihilation.'

'And you kept this fine news for a winter campaign, my good Mr. Rigby,' said Lady Monmouth, with a subtle smile. 'It was a weapon of service. I give you my compliments.'

'The time is not always ripe,' said Mr. Rigby.

'But it is now most mature. Let us not conceal it from ourselves that, since his first visit to Coningsby, we have neither of us really been in the same position which we then occupied, or believed we should occupy. My lord, though you would scarcely believe it, has a weakness for this boy; and though I by my marriage, and you by your zealous ability, have apparently secured a permanent hold upon his habits, I have never doubted that when the crisis comes we shall find that the golden fruit is plucked by one who has not watched the garden. You take me? There is no reason why we two should clash together: we can both of us find what we want, and more securely, if we work in company.'

'I trust my devotion to you has never been doubted, dear madam.'

'Nor to yourself, dear Mr. Rigby. Go now: the game is before you. Rid me of this Coningsby, and I will secure you all that you want. Doubt not me. There is no reason. I want a firm ally. There must be two.'

'It shall be done,' said Rigby; 'it must be done. If once the notion gets wind that one of the Castle family may perchance stand for Darlford, all the present combinations will be disorganised. It must be done at once. I know that the Government will dissolve.'

'So I hear for certain,' said Lucretia. 'Be sure there is no time to lose. What does he want with you to-day?'

'I know not: there are so many things.'

'To be sure; and yet I cannot doubt he will speak of this quarrel. Let not the occasion be lost. Whatever his mood, the subject may be introduced. If good, you may guide him more easily; if dark, the love for the Hellingsley girl, the fact of the brother being in his castle, drinking his wine, riding his horses, ordering about his servants; you will omit no details: a Millbank quite at home at Coningsby will lash him to madness! 'Tis quite ripe. Not a word that you have seen me. Go, go, or he may hear that you have arrived. I shall be at home all the morning. It will be but gallant that you should pay me a little visit when you have transacted your business. You understand. *Au revoir!*'

Lady Monmouth took up again her French novel; but her eyes soon glanced over the page, unattached by its contents. Her own existence was too interesting to find any excitement in fiction. It was nearly three years since her marriage; that great step which she ever had a conviction was to lead to results still greater. Of late she had often been filled with a presentiment that they were near at hand; never more so than on this day. Irresistible was the current of associations that led her to meditate on freedom, wealth, power; on a career which should at the same time dazzle the imagination and gratify her heart. Notwithstanding the gossip of Paris, founded on no authentic knowledge of her husband's character or information, based on the haphazard observations of the floating multitude, Lucretia herself had no

reason to fear that her influence over Lord Monmouth, if exerted, was materially diminished. But satisfied that he had formed no other tie, with her ever the test of her position, she had not thought it expedient, and certainly would have found it irksome, to maintain that influence by any ostentatious means. She knew that Lord Monmouth was capricious, easily wearied, soon palled; and that on men who have no affections, affection has no hold. Their passions or their fancies, on the contrary, as it seemed to her, are rather stimulated by neglect or indifference, provided that they are not systematic; and the circumstance of a wife being admired by one who is not her husband sometimes wonderfully revives the passion or renovates the respect of him who should be devoted to her.

The health of Lord Monmouth was the subject which never was long absent from the vigilance or meditation of Lucretia. She was well assured that his life was no longer secure. She knew that after their marriage he had made a will, which secured to her a large portion of his great wealth in case of their having no issue, and after the accident at Paris all hope in that respect was over. Recently the extreme anxiety which Lord Monmouth had evinced about terminating the abeyance of the barony to which his first wife was a co-heiress in favour of his grandson, had alarmed Lucretia. To establish in the land another branch of the house of Coningsby was evidently the last excitement of Lord Monmouth, and perhaps a permanent one. If the idea were once accepted, notwithstanding the limit to its endowment which Lord Monmouth might at the first start contemplate, Lucretia had sufficiently studied his temperament to

be convinced that all his energies and all his resources would ultimately be devoted to its practical fulfilment. Her original prejudice against Coningsby and jealousy of his influence had therefore of late been considerably aggravated; and the intelligence that for the first time there was a misunderstanding between Coningsby and her husband filled her with excitement and hope. She knew her lord well enough to feel assured that the cause for the displeasure in the present instance could not be a light one; she resolved instantly to labour that it should not be transient; and it so happened that she had applied for aid in this endeavour to the very individual in whose power it rested to accomplish all her desire, while in doing so he felt at the same time he was defending his own position and advancing his own interests.

Lady Monmouth was now awaiting with some excitement the return of Mr. Rigby. His interview with his patron was of unusual length. An hour, and more than an hour, had elapsed. Lady Monmouth again threw aside the book which more than once she had discarded. She paced the room, restless rather than disquieted. She had complete confidence in Rigby's ability for the occasion; and with her knowledge of Lord Monmouth's character, she could not contemplate the possibility of failure, if the circumstances were adroitly introduced to his consideration. Still time stole on: the harassing and exhausting process of suspense was acting on her nervous system. She began to think that Rigby had not found the occasion favourable for the catastrophe; that Lord Monmouth, from apprehension of disturbing Rigby and entailing explanations on himself, had

avoided the necessary communication; that her skilful combination for the moment had missed. Two hours had now elapsed, and Lucretia, in a state of considerable irritation, was about to inquire whether Mr. Rigby were with his lordship, when the door of her boudoir opened, and that gentleman appeared.

'How long you have been!' exclaimed Lady Monmouth. 'Now sit down and tell me what has passed.'

Lady Monmouth pointed to the seat which Flora had occupied.

'I thank your ladyship,' said Mr. Rigby, with a somewhat grave and yet perplexed expression of countenance, and seating himself at some little distance from his companion, 'but I am very well here.'

There was a pause. Instead of responding to the invitation of Lady Monmouth to communicate with his usual readiness and volubility, Mr. Rigby was silent, and, if it were possible to use such an expression with regard to such a gentleman, apparently embarrassed.

'Well,' said Lady Monmouth, 'does he know about the Millbanks?'

'Everything,' said Mr. Rigby.

'And what did he say?'

'His lordship was greatly shocked,' replied Mr. Rigby, with a pious expression of features. 'Such monstrous ingratitude! As his lordship very justly observed, "It is impossible to say what is going on under my own roof, or to what I can trust."'

'But he made an exception in your favour, I dare say, my dear Mr. Rigby,' said Lady Monmouth.

'Lord Monmouth was pleased to say that I possessed his entire confidence,' said Mr. Rigby, 'and that he looked to me in his difficulties.'

'Very sensible of him. And what is to become of Mr. Coningsby?'

'The steps which his lordship is about to take with reference to the establishment generally,' said Mr. Rigby, 'will allow the connection that at present subsists between that gentleman and his noble relative, now that Lord Monmouth's eyes are open to his real character, to terminate naturally, without the necessity of any formal explanation.'

'But what do you mean by the steps he is going to take in his establishment generally?'

'Lord Monmouth thinks he requires change of scene.'

'Oh! is he going to drag me abroad again?' exclaimed Lady Monmouth, with great impatience.

'Why, not exactly,' said Mr. Rigby, rather demurely.

'I hope is he not going again to that dreadful castle in Lancashire.'

'Lord Monmouth was thinking that, as you were tired of Paris, you might find some of the German baths agreeable.'

'Why, there is nothing that Lord Monmouth dislikes so much as a German bathing-place!'

'Exactly,' said Mr. Rigby.

'Then how capricious in him wanting to go to them.'

'He does not want to go to them!'

'What do you mean, Mr. Rigby?' said Lady Monmouth, in a lower voice, and looking him full in the face with a glance seldom bestowed.

There was a churlish and unusual look about Rigby. It was as if malignant, and yet at the same time a little frightened, he had screwed himself into doggedness.

'I mean what Lord Monmouth means. He suggests that if your ladyship were to pass the summer at Kissengen, for example, and a paragraph in the *Morning Post* were to announce that his lordship was about to join you there, all awkwardness would be removed; and no one could for a moment take the liberty of supposing, even if his lordship did not ultimately reach you, that anything like a separation had occurred.'

'A separation!' said Lady Monmouth.

'Quite amicable,' said Mr. Rigby. 'I would never have consented to interfere in the affair, but to secure that most desirable point.'

'I will see Lord Monmouth at once,' said Lucretia, rising, her natural pallor aggravated into a ghoul-like tint.

'His lordship has gone out,' said Mr. Rigby, rather stubbornly.

'Our conversation, sir, then finishes: I wait his return.' She bowed haughtily.

'His lordship will never return to Monmouth House again.'

Lucretia sprang from the sofa.

'Miserable craven!' she exclaimed. 'Has the cowardly tyrant fled? And he really thinks that I am to be crushed by such an instrument as this! Pah! He may leave Monmouth House, but I shall not. Begone, sir!'

'Still anxious to secure an amicable separation,' said Mr. Rigby, 'your ladyship must allow me to place the circumstances of the case fairly before your excellent judgment. Lord Monmouth has decided upon a course: you know as well as I that he never swerves from his resolutions. He has left peremp-

tory instructions, and he will listen to no appeal. He has empowered me to represent to your ladyship that he wishes in every way to consider your convenience. He suggests that everything, in short, should be arranged as if his lordship were himself unhappily no more; that your ladyship should at once enter into your jointure, which shall be made payable quarterly to your order, provided you can find it convenient to live upon the Continent,' added Mr. Rigby, with some hesitation.

'And suppose I cannot?'

'Why, then, we will leave your ladyship to the assertion of your rights.'

'We!'

'I beg your ladyship's pardon. I speak as the friend of the family, the trustee of your marriage settlement, well known also as Lord Monmouth's executor,' said Mr. Rigby, his countenance gradually regaining its usual callous confidence, and some degree of self-complacency, as he remembered the good things which he enumerated.

'I have decided,' said Lady Monmouth. 'I will assert my rights. Your master has mistaken my character and his own position. He shall rue the day that he assailed me.'

'I should be sorry if there were any violence,' said Mr. Rigby, 'especially as everything is left to my management and control. An office, indeed, which I only accepted for your mutual advantage. I think, upon reflection, I might put before your ladyship some considerations which might induce you, on the whole, to be of opinion that it will be better for us to draw together in this business, as we have hitherto, indeed, throughout an acquaintance now of some

years.' Rigby was resuming all his usual tone of brazen familiarity.

'Your self-confidence exceeds even Lord Monmouth's estimate of it,' said Lucretia.

'Now, now, you are unkind. Your ladyship mistakes my position. I am interfering in this business for your sake. I might have refused the office. It would have fallen to another, who would have fulfilled it without any delicacy and consideration for your feelings. View my interposition in that light, my dear Lady Monmouth, and circumstances will assume altogether a new colour.'

'I beg that you will quit the house, sir.'

Mr. Rigby shook his head. 'I would with pleasure, to oblige you, were it in my power; but Lord Monmouth has particularly desired that I should take up my residence here permanently. The servants are now my servants. It is useless to ring the bell. For your ladyship's sake, I wish everything to be accomplished with tranquillity, and, if possible, friendliness and good feeling. You can have even a week for the preparations for your departure, if necessary. I will take that upon myself. Any carriages, too, that you desire; your jewels, at least all those that are not at the bankers'. The arrangement about your jointure, your letters of credit, even your passport, I will attend to myself; only too happy if, by this painful interference, I have in any way contributed to soften the annoyance which, at the first blush, you may naturally experience, but which, like everything else, take my word, will wear off.'

'I shall send for Lord Eskdale,' said Lady Monmouth. 'He is a gentleman.'

'I am quite sure,' said Mr. Rigby, 'that Lord Esk-

dale will give you the same advice as myself, if he only reads your ladyship's letters,' he added slowly, 'to Prince Trautsmansdorff.'

'My letters?' said Lady Monmouth.

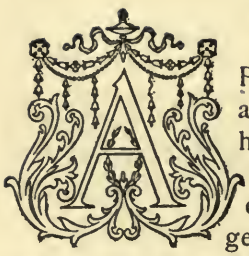
'Pardon me,' said Rigby, putting his hand in his pocket, as if to guard some treasure, 'I have no wish to revive painful associations; but I have them, and I must act upon them, if you persist in treating me as a foe, who am in reality your best friend; which indeed I ought to be, having the honour of acting as trustee under your marriage settlement, and having known you so many years.'

'Leave me for the present alone,' said Lady Monmouth. 'Send me my servant, if I have one. I shall not remain here the week which you mention, but quit at once this house, which I wish I had never entered. Adieu! Mr. Rigby, you are now lord of Monmouth House, and yet I cannot help feeling you too will be discharged before he dies.'

Mr. Rigby made Lady Monmouth a bow such as became the master of the house, and then withdrew.

CHAPTER LXIX.

Reconciliation.



A PARAGRAPH in the *Morning Post*, a few days after his interview with his grandfather, announcing that Lord and Lady Monmouth had quitted town for the baths of Kissengen, startled Coningsby, who called the same day at Monmouth House in consequence. There he learnt more authentic details of their unexpected movements. It appeared that Lady Monmouth had certainly departed; and the porter, with a rather sceptical visage, informed Coningsby that Lord Monmouth was to follow; but when, he could not tell. At present his lordship was at Brighton, and in a few days was about to take possession of a villa at Richmond, which had for some time been fitting up for him under the superintendence of Mr. Rigby, who, as Coningsby also learnt, now permanently resided at Monmouth House. All this intelligence made Coningsby ponder. He was sufficiently acquainted with the parties concerned to feel assured that he had not learnt the whole truth. What had really taken place, and what was the real cause of the occurrences, were equally mystical to him: all he was convinced

of was, that some great domestic revolution had been suddenly effected.

Coningsby entertained for his grandfather a sincere affection. With the exception of their last unfortunate interview, he had experienced from Lord Monmouth nothing but kindness both in phrase and deed. There was also something in Lord Monmouth, when he pleased it, rather fascinating to young men; and as Coningsby had never occasioned him any feelings but pleasurable ones, he was always disposed to make himself delightful to his grandson. The experience of a consummate man of the world, advanced in life, detailed without rigidity to youth, with frankness and facility, is bewitching. Lord Monmouth was never garrulous: he was always pithy, and could be picturesque. He revealed a character in a sentence, and detected the ruling passion with the hand of a master. Besides, he had seen everybody and had done everything; and though, on the whole, too indolent for conversation, and loving to be talked to, these were circumstances which made his too rare communications the more precious.

With these feelings, Coningsby resolved, the moment that he learnt that his grandfather was established at Richmond, to pay him a visit. He was informed that Lord Monmouth was at home, and he was shown into a drawing-room, where he found two French ladies in their bonnets, whom he soon discovered to be actresses. They also had come down to pay a visit to his grandfather, and were by no means displeased to pass the interval that must elapse before they had that pleasure in chatting with his grandson. Coningsby found them extremely amusing; with the finest spirits in the world, imper-

turbable good temper, and an unconscious practical philosophy that defied the devil Care and all his works. And well it was that he found such agreeable companions, for time flowed on, and no summons arrived to call him to his grandfather's presence, and no herald to announce his grandfather's advent. The ladies and Coningsby had exhausted badinage; they had examined and criticised all the furniture, had rifled the vases of their prettiest flowers; and Clotilde, who had already sung several times, was proposing a duet to Ermengarde, when a servant entered, and told the ladies that a carriage was in attendance to give them an airing, and after that Lord Monmouth hoped they would return and dine with him; then turning to Coningsby, he informed him, with his lord's compliments, that Lord Monmouth was sorry he was too much engaged to see him.

Nothing was to be done but to put a tolerably good face upon it. 'Embrace Lord Monmouth for me,' said Coningsby to his fair friends, 'and tell him I think it very unkind that he did not ask me to dinner with you.'

Coningsby said this with a gay air, but really with a depressed spirit. He felt convinced that his grandfather was deeply displeased with him; and as he rode away from the villa, he could not resist the strong impression that he was destined never to re-enter it. Yet it was decreed otherwise. It so happened that the idle message which Coningsby had left for his grandfather, and which he never seriously supposed for a moment that his late companions would have given their host, operated entirely in his favour. Whatever were the feelings with respect to Coningsby at the bottom of Lord Monmouth's heart, he

was actuated in his refusal to see him not more from displeasure than from an anticipatory horror of something like a scene. Even a surrender from Coningsby without terms, and an offer to declare himself a candidate for Darlford, or to do anything else that his grandfather wished, would have been disagreeable to Lord Monmouth in his present mood. As in politics a revolution is often followed by a season of torpor, so in the case of Lord Monmouth the separation from his wife, which had for a long period occupied his meditation, was succeeded by a vein of mental dissipation. He did not wish to be reminded by anything or any person that he had still in some degree the misfortune of being a responsible member of society. He wanted to be surrounded by individuals who were above or below the conventional interests of what is called 'the World.' He wanted to hear nothing of those painful and embarrassing influences which from our contracted experience and want of enlightenment we magnify into such undue importance. For this purpose he wished to have about him persons whose knowledge of the cares of life concerned only the means of existence, and whose sense of its objects referred only to the sources of enjoyment; persons who had not been educated in the idolatry of respectability; that is to say, of realising such an amount of what is termed character by a hypocritical deference to the prejudices of the community as may enable them, at suitable times, and under convenient circumstances and disguises, to plunder the public. This was the Monmouth philosophy.

With these feelings, Lord Monmouth recoiled at this moment from grandsons and relations and ties of all kinds. He did not wish to be reminded of his

identity, but to swim unmolested and undisturbed in his Epicurean dream. When, therefore, his fair visitors — Clotilde, who opened her mouth only to breathe roses and diamonds, and Ermengarde, who was so good-natured that she sacrificed even her lovers to her friends — saw him merely to exclaim at the same moment, and with the same voices of thrilling joyousness, — 'Why did not you ask him to dinner?'

And then, without waiting for his reply, entered, with that rapidity of elocution which Frenchwomen can alone command, into the catalogue of his charms and accomplishments, Lord Monmouth began to regret that he really had not seen Coningsby, who, it appeared, might have greatly contributed to the pleasure of the day. The message, which was duly given, however, settled the business. Lord Monmouth felt that any chance of explanations, or even allusions to the past, was out of the question; and to defend himself from the accusations of his animated guests, he said,

'Well, he shall come to dine with you next time.'

There is no end to the influence of woman on our life. It is at the bottom of everything that happens to us. And so it was, that, in spite of all the combinations of Lucretia and Mr. Rigby, and the mortification and resentment of Lord Monmouth, the favourable impression he casually made on a couple of French actresses occasioned Coningsby, before a month had elapsed since his memorable interview at Monmouth House, to receive an invitation again to dine with his grandfather.

The party was agreeable. Clotilde and Ermengarde had wits as sparkling as their eyes. There was the manager of the Opera, a great friend of Ville-

becque, and his wife, a splendid lady, who had been a prima donna of celebrity, and still had a commanding voice for a chamber; a Carlist nobleman who lived upon his traditions, and who, though without a sou, could tell of a festival given by his family, before the revolution, which had cost a million of francs; and a Neapolitan physician, in whom Lord Monmouth had great confidence, and who himself believed in the elixir vitæ, made up the party, with Lucian Gay, Coningsby, and Mr. Rigby. Our hero remarked that Villebecque on this occasion sat at the bottom of the table, but Flora did not appear.

In the meantime, the month which brought about this satisfactory and at one time unexpected result was fruitful also in other circumstances still more interesting. Coningsby and Edith met frequently, if to breathe the same atmosphere in the same crowded saloons can be described as meeting; ever watching each other's movements, and yet studious never to encounter each other's glance. The charms of Miss Millbank had become an universal topic, they were celebrated in ball-rooms, they were discussed at clubs: Edith was the beauty of the season. All admired her, many sighed even to express their admiration; but the devotion of Lord Beaumanoir, who always hovered about her, deterred them from a rivalry which might have made the boldest despair. As for Coningsby, he passed his life principally with the various members of the Sydney family, and was almost daily riding with Lady Everingham and her sister, generally accompanied by Lord Henry and his friend Eustace Lyle, between whom, indeed, and Coningsby there were relations of intimacy scarcely less inseparable. Coningsby had spoken to Lady Everingham of the

rumoured marriage of her elder brother, and found, although the family had not yet been formally apprised of it, she entertained little doubt of its ultimate occurrence. She admired Miss Millbank, with whom her acquaintance continued slight; and she wished, of course, that her brother should marry and be happy. 'But Percy is often in love,' she would add, 'and never likes us to be very intimate with his inamoratas. He thinks it destroys the romance; and that domestic familiarity may compromise his heroic character. However,' she added, 'I really believe that will be a match.'

On the whole, though he bore a serene aspect to the world, Coningsby passed this month in a state of restless misery. His soul was brooding on one subject, and he had no confidant: he could not resist the spell that impelled him to the society where Edith might at least be seen, and the circle in which he lived was one in which her name was frequently mentioned. Alone, in his solitary rooms in the Albany, he felt all his desolation; and often a few minutes before he figured in the world, apparently followed and courted by all, he had been plunged in the darkest fits of irremediable wretchedness.

He had, of course, frequently met Lady Wallinger, but their salutations, though never omitted, and on each side cordial, were brief. There seemed to be a tacit understanding between them not to refer to a subject fruitful in painful reminiscences.

The season waned. In the fulfilment of a project originally formed in the playing-fields of Eton, often recurred to at Cambridge, and cherished with the fondness with which men cling to a scheme of early youth, Coningsby, Henry Sydney, Vere, and Buck-

hurst had engaged some moors together this year; and in a few days they were about to quit town for Scotland. They had pressed Eustace Lyle to accompany them, but he, who in general seemed to have no pleasure greater than their society, had surprised them by declining their invitation, with some vague mention that he rather thought he should go abroad.

It was the last day of July, and all the world were at a breakfast given, at a fanciful cottage situate in beautiful gardens on the banks of the Thames, by Lady Everingham. The weather was as bright as the romances of Boccaccio; there were pyramids of strawberries, in bowls colossal enough to hold orange-trees; and the choicest band filled the air with enchanting strains, while a brilliant multitude sauntered on turf like velvet, or roamed in desultory existence amid the quivering shades of winding walks.

'My fête was prophetic,' said Lady Everingham, when she saw Coningsby. 'I am glad it is connected with an incident. It gives it a point.'

'You are mystical as well as prophetic. Tell me what we are to celebrate.'

'Theresa is going to be married.'

'Then I, too, will prophesy, and name the hero of the romance, Eustace Lyle.'

'You have been more prescient than I,' said Lady Everingham, 'perhaps because I was thinking too much of some one else.'

'It seems to me an union which all must acknowledge perfect. I hardly know which I love best. I have had my suspicions a long time; and when Eustace refused to go to the moors with us, though I said nothing, I was convinced.'

'At any rate,' said Lady Everingham, sighing, with a rather smiling face, 'we are kinsfolk, Mr. Coningsby; though I would gladly have wished to have been more.'

'Were those your thoughts, dear lady? Ever kind to me! Happiness,' he added, in a mournful tone, 'I fear can never be mine.'

'And why?'

'Ah! 'tis a tale too strange and sorrowful for a day when, like Seged, we must all determine to be happy.'

'You have already made me miserable.'

'Here comes a group that will make you gay,' said Coningsby as he moved on. Edith and the Wallingers, accompanied by Lord Beaumanoir, Mr. Melton, and Sir Charles Buckhurst, formed the party. They seemed profuse in their congratulations to Lady Everingham, having already learnt the intelligence from her brother.

Coningsby stopped to speak to Lady St. Julians, who had still a daughter to marry. Both Augustina, who was at Coningsby Castle, and Clara Isabella, who ought to have been there, had each secured the right man. But Adelaide Victoria had now appeared, and Lady St. Julians had a great regard for the favourite grandson of Lord Monmouth, and also for the influential friend of Lord Vere and Sir Charles Buckhurst. In case Coningsby did not determine to become her son-in-law himself, he might counsel either of his friends to a judicious decision on an inevitable act.

'Strawberries and cream?' said Lord Eskdale to Mr. Ormsby, who seemed occupied with some delicacies.

'Egad! no, no, no; those days are passed. I think there is a little easterly wind with all this fine appearance.'

'I am for in-door nature myself,' said Lord Eskdale. 'Do you know, I do not half like the way Monmouth is going on? He never gets out of that villa of his. He should change his air more. Tell him.'

'It is no use telling him anything. Have you heard anything of Miladi?'

'I had a letter from her to-day: she writes in good spirits. I am sorry it broke up, and yet I never thought it would last so long.'

'I gave them two years,' said Mr. Ormsby. 'Lord Monmouth lived with his first wife two years. And afterwards with the Mirandola at Milan, at least nearly two years; it was a year and ten months. I must know, for he called me in to settle affairs. I took the lady to the baths at Lucca, on the pretence that Monmouth would meet us there. He went to Paris. All his great affairs have been two years. I remember I wanted to bet Cassilis, at White's, on it when he married; but I thought, being his intimate friend—the oldest friend he has, indeed, and one of his trustees—it was perhaps as well not to do it.'

'You should have made the bet with himself,' said Lord Eskdale, 'and then there never would have been a separation.'

'Hah, hah, hah! Do you know, I feel the wind?'

About an hour after this, Coningsby, who had just quitted the Duchess, met, on a terrace by the river, Lady Wallinger, walking with Mrs. Guy Flouncey and a Russian Prince, whom that lady was enchanting. Coningsby was about to pass with some slight

courtesy, but Lady Wallinger stopped and would speak to him, on slight subjects, the weather and the fête, but yet adroitly enough managed to make him turn and join her. Mrs. Guy Flouncey walked on a little before with her Russian admirer. Lady Wallinger followed with Coningsby.

'The match that has been proclaimed to-day has greatly surprised me,' said Lady Wallinger.

'Indeed!' said Coningsby: 'I confess I was long prepared for it. And it seems to me the most natural alliance conceivable, and one that every one must approve.'

'Lady Everingham seems much surprised at it.'

'Ah! Lady Everingham is a brilliant personage, and cannot deign to observe obvious circumstances.'

'Do you know, Mr. Coningsby, that I always thought you were engaged to Lady Theresa?'

'I!'

'Indeed, we were informed more than a month ago that you were positively going to be married to her.'

'I am not one of those who can shift their affections with such rapidity, Lady Wallinger.'

Lady Wallinger looked distressed. 'You remember our meeting you on the stairs at —— House, Mr. Coningsby?'

'Painfully. It is deeply graven on my brain.'

'Edith had just been informed that you were going to be married to Lady Theresa.'

'Not surely by him to whom she is herself going to be married?' said Coningsby, reddening.

'I am not aware that she is going to be married to any one. Lord Beaumanoir admires her, has always admired her. But Edith has given him no en-

couragement, at least gave him no encouragement as long as she believed — but why dwell on such an unhappy subject, Mr. Coningsby? I am to blame; I have been to blame perhaps before, but indeed I think it cruel, very cruel, that Edith and you are kept asunder.'

'You have always been my best, my dearest friend, and are the most amiable and admirable of women. But tell me, is it indeed true that Edith is not going to be married?'

At this moment Mrs. Guy Flouncey turned round, and assuring Lady Wallinger that the Prince and herself had agreed to refer some point to her about the most transcendental ethics of flirtation, this deeply interesting conversation was arrested, and Lady Wallinger, with becoming suavity, was obliged to listen to the lady's lively appeal of exaggerated nonsense and the Prince's affected protests, while Coningsby walked by her side, pale and agitated, and then offered his arm to Lady Wallinger, which she accepted with an affectionate pressure. At the end of the terrace they met some other guests, and soon were immersed in the multitude that thronged the lawn.

'There is Sir Joseph,' said Lady Wallinger, and Coningsby looked up, and saw Edith on his arm. They were unconsciously approaching them. Lord Beaumanoir was there, but he seemed to shrink into nothing to-day before Buckhurst, who was captivated for the moment by Edith, and hearing that no knight was resolute enough to try a fall with the Marquess, was impelled by his talent for action to enter the lists. He had talked down everybody, unhorsed every cavalier. Nobody had a chance against him: he answered all your questions before you asked them;

contradicted everybody with the intrepidity of a Rigby; annihilated your anecdotes by historiettes infinitely more piquant; and if anybody chanced to make a joke which he could not excel, declared immediately that it was a Joe Miller. He was absurd, extravagant, grotesque, noisy; but he was young, rattling, and interesting, from his health and spirits. Edith was extremely amused by him, and was encouraging by her smile his spiritual excesses, when they all suddenly met Lady Wallinger and Coningsby.

The eyes of Edith and Coningsby met for the first time since they so cruelly encountered on the staircase of —— House. A deep, quick blush suffused her face, her eyes gleamed with a sudden coruscation; suddenly and quickly she put forth her hand.

Yes! he presses once more that hand which permanently to retain is the passion of his life, yet which may never be his! It seemed that for the ravishing delight of that moment he could have borne with cheerfulness all the dark and harrowing misery of the year that had passed away since he embraced her in the woods of Hellingsley, and pledged his faith by the waters of the rushing Darl.

He seized the occasion which offered itself, a moment to walk by her side, and to snatch some brief instants of unreserved communion.

'Forgive me!' she said.

'Ah! how could you ever doubt me?' said Coningsby.

'I was unhappy.'

'And now we are to each other as before?'

'And will be, come what come may.'

CHAPTER LXX.

Startling News.

T WAS merry Christmas at St. Geneviève. There was a yule log blazing on every hearth in that wide domain, from the hall of the squire to the peasant's roof. The Buttery Hatch was open for the whole week from noon to sunset; all comers might take their fill, and each carry away as much boiled beef, white bread, and jolly ale as a strong man could bear in a basket with one hand. For every woman a red cloak, and a coat of broadcloth for every man. All day long, carts laden with fuel and warm raiment were traversing the various districts, distributing comfort and dispensing cheer. For a Christian gentleman of high degree was Eustace Lyle.

Within his hall, too, he holds his revel, and his beauteous bride welcomes their guests, from her noble parents to the faithful tenants of the house. All classes are mingled in the joyous equality that becomes the season, at once sacred and merry. There are carols for the eventful eve, and mummers for the festive day.

The Duke and Duchess, and every member of the family, had consented this year to keep their Christ-

mas with the newly-married couple. Coningsby, too, was there, and all his friends. The party was numerous, gay, hearty, and happy, for they were all united by sympathy.

They were planning that Henry Sydney should be appointed Lord of Misrule, or ordained Abbot of Unreason at the least, so successful had been his revival of the mummers; the hobby-horse not forgotten. The host had entrusted to Lord Henry the restoration of many old observances; and the joyous feeling which this celebration of Christmas had diffused throughout an extensive district was a fresh argument in favour of Lord Henry's principle, that a mere mechanical mitigation of the material necessities of the humbler classes, a mitigation which must inevitably be limited, can never alone avail sufficiently to ameliorate their condition; that their condition is not merely 'a knife and fork question,' to use the coarse and shallow phrase of the utilitarian school; that a simple satisfaction of the grosser necessities of our nature will not make a happy people; that you must cultivate the heart as well as seek to content the belly; and that the surest means to elevate the character of the people is to appeal to their affections.

There is nothing more interesting than to trace predisposition. An indefinite, yet strong sympathy with the peasantry of the realm had been one of the characteristic sensibilities of Lord Henry at Eton. Yet a schoolboy, he had busied himself with their pastimes and the details of their cottage economy. As he advanced in life the horizon of his views expanded with his intelligence and his experience; and the son of one of the noblest of our houses, to whom the delights of life are offered with fatal facility, on the very

threshold of his career he devoted his time and thought, labour and life, to one vast and noble purpose, the elevation of the condition of the great body of the people.

'I vote for Buckhurst being Lord of Misrule,' said Lord Henry: 'I will be content with being his gentleman usher.'

'It shall be put to the vote,' said Lord Vere.

'No one has a chance against Buckhurst,' said Coningsby.

'Now, Sir Charles,' said Lady Everingham, 'your absolute sway is about to commence. And what is your will?'

'The first thing must be my formal installation,' said Buckhurst. 'I vote the boar's head be carried in procession thrice round the hall, and Beau shall be the champion to challenge all who question my right. Duke, you shall be my chief butler, the Duchess my herb-woman. She is to walk before me, and scatter rosemary. Coningsby shall carry the boar's head; Lady Theresa and Lady Everingham shall sing the canticle; Lord Everingham shall be marshal of the lists, and put all in the stocks who are found sober and decorous; Lyle shall be the palmer from the Holy Land, and Vere shall ride the hobby-horse. Some must carry cups of Hippocras, some lighted tapers; all must join in chorus.'

He ceased his instructions, and all hurried away to carry them into effect. Some hastily arrayed themselves in fanciful dresses, the ladies in robes of white, with garlands of flowers; some drew pieces of armour from the wall, and decked themselves with helm and hauberk; others waved ancient banners. They brought in the boar's head on a large silver dish, and Con-

ingsby raised it aloft. They formed into procession, the Duchess distributing rosemary; Buckhurst swaggering with all the majesty of Tamerlane, his mock court irresistibly humorous with their servility; and the sweet voice of Lady Everingham chanting the first verse of the canticle, followed in the second by the rich tones of Lady Theresa:

I.

Caput Apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.
The Boar's heade in hande bring I,
With garlandes gay and rosemary:
I pray you all singe merrily,
Qui estis in convivio.

II.

Caput Apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.
The Boar's heade I understande
Is the chief servyce in this lande
Yoke whereever it be fande,
Servite cum cantico.

The procession thrice paraded the hall. Then they stopped; and the Lord of Misrule ascended his throne, and his courtiers formed round him in circle. Behind him they held the ancient banners and waved their glittering arms, and placed on a lofty and illuminated pedestal the boar's head covered with garlands. It was a good picture, and the Lord of Misrule sustained his part with untiring energy. He was addressing his court in a pompous rhapsody of merry nonsense, when a servant approached Coningsby, and told him that he was wanted without.

Our hero retired unperceived. A despatch had arrived for him from London. Without any prescience of its purpose, he nevertheless broke the seal with a trembling hand. His presence was immediately desired in town: Lord Monmouth was dead.

CHAPTER LXXI.

A Crash.

THIS was a crisis in the life of Coningsby; yet, like many critical epochs, the person most interested in it was not sufficiently aware of its character. The first feeling which he experienced at the intelligence was sincere affliction. He was fond of his grandfather; had received great kindness from him, and at a period of life when it was most welcome. The neglect and hardships of his early years, instead of leaving a prejudice against one who, by some, might be esteemed their author, had by their contrast only rendered Coningsby more keenly sensible of the solicitude and enjoyment which had been lavished on his happy youth.

The next impression on his mind was undoubtedly a natural and reasonable speculation on the effect of this bereavement on his fortunes. Lord Monmouth had more than once assured Coningsby that he had provided for him as became a near relative to whom he was attached, and in a manner which ought to satisfy the wants and wishes of an English gentleman. The allowance which Lord Monmouth had made him, as considerable as usually accorded to the eldest sons

of wealthy peers, might justify him in estimating his future patrimony as extremely ample. He was aware, indeed, that at a subsequent period his grandfather had projected for him fortunes of a still more elevated character. He looked to Coningsby as the future representative of an ancient barony, and had been purchasing territory with the view of supporting the title. But Coningsby did not by any means firmly reckon on these views being realised. He had a suspicion that in thwarting the wishes of his grandfather in not becoming a candidate for Darlford, he had at the moment arrested arrangements which, from the tone of Lord Monmouth's communication, he believed were then in progress for that purpose; and he thought it improbable, with his knowledge of his grandfather's habits, that Lord Monmouth had found either time or inclination to resume before his decease the completion of these plans. Indeed there was a period when, in adopting the course which he pursued with respect to Darlford, Coningsby was well aware that he perilled more than the large fortune which was to accompany the barony. Had not a separation between Lord Monmouth and his wife taken place simultaneously with Coningsby's difference with his grandfather, he was conscious that the consequences might have been even altogether fatal to his prospects; but the absence of her evil influence at such a conjuncture, its permanent removal, indeed, from the scene, coupled with his fortunate though not formal reconciliation with Lord Monmouth, had long ago banished from his memory all those apprehensions to which he had felt it impossible at the time to shut his eyes. Before he left town for Scotland he had made a farewell visit to his grandfather, who,

though not as cordial as in old days, had been gracious; and Coningsby, during his excursion to the moors, and his various visits to the country, had continued at intervals to write to his grandfather, as had been for some years his custom. On the whole, with an indefinite feeling which, in spite of many a rational effort, did nevertheless haunt his mind, that this great and sudden event might exercise a vast and beneficial influence on his worldly position, Coningsby could not but feel some consolation in the affliction which he sincerely experienced, in the hope that he might at all events now offer to Edith a home worthy of her charms, her virtues, and her love.

Although he had not seen her since their hurried yet sweet reconciliation in the gardens of Lady Everingham, Coningsby was never long without indirect intelligence of the incidents of her life; and the correspondence between Lady Everingham and Henry Sydney, while they were at the moors, had apprised him that Lord Beaumanoir's suit had terminated unsuccessfully almost immediately after his brother had quitted London.

It was late in the evening when Coningsby arrived in town: he called at once on Lord Eskdale, who was one of Lord Monmouth's executors; and he persuaded Coningsby, whom he saw depressed, to dine with him alone.

'You should not be seen at a club,' said the good-natured peer; 'and I remember myself in old days what was the wealth of an Albanian larder.'

Lord Eskdale, at dinner, talked frankly of the disposition of Lord Monmouth's property. He spoke as a matter of course that Coningsby was his grandfather's principal heir.

'I don't know whether you will be happier with a large fortune,' said Lord Eskdale. 'It is a troublesome thing: nobody is satisfied with what you do with it; very often not yourself. To maintain an equable expenditure; not to spend too much on one thing, too little on another, is an art. There must be a harmony, a keeping, in disbursement, which very few men have. Great wealth wearies. The thing to have is about ten thousand a year, and the world to think you have only five. There is some enjoyment then; one is let alone. But the instant you have a large fortune, duties commence. And then impudent fellows borrow your money; and if you ask them for it again, they go about town saying you are a screw.'

Lord Monmouth had died suddenly at his Richmond villa, which latterly he never quitted, at a little supper, with no persons near him but those who were amusing. He suddenly found he could not lift his glass to his lips, and being extremely polite, waited a few minutes before he asked Clotilde, who was singing a sparkling drinking-song, to do him that service. When, in accordance with his request, she reached him, it was too late. The ladies shrieked, being frightened: at first they were in despair, but, after reflection, they evinced some intention of plundering the house. Villebecque, who was absent at the moment, arrived in time; and everybody became orderly and broken-hearted.

The body had been removed to Monmouth House, where it had been embalmed and laid in state. The funeral was not numerously attended. There was nobody in town; some distinguished connections, however, came up from the country, though it was a period inconvenient for such movements. After the

funeral, the will was to be read in the principal saloon of Monmouth House, one of those gorgeous apartments that had excited the boyish wonder of Coningsby on his first visit to that paternal roof, and now hung in black, adorned with the escutcheon of the deceased peer.

The testamentary dispositions of the late lord were still unknown, though the names of his executors had been announced by his family solicitor, in whose custody the will and codicils had always remained. The executors under the will were Lord Eskdale, Mr. Ormsby, and Mr. Rigby. By a subsequent appointment Sidonia had been added. All these individuals were now present. Coningsby, who had been chief mourner, stood on the right hand of the solicitor, who sat at the end of a long table, round which, in groups, were ranged all who had attended the funeral, including several of the superior members of the household, among them M. Villebecque.

The solicitor rose and explained that though Lord Monmouth had been in the habit of very frequently adding codicils to his will, the original will, however changed or modified, had never been revoked; it was therefore necessary to commence by reading that instrument. So saying, he sat down, and breaking the seals of a large packet, he produced the will of Philip Augustus, Marquess of Monmouth, which had been retained in his custody since its execution.

By this will, of the date of 1829, the sum of 10,000*l.* was left to Coningsby, then unknown to his grandfather; the same sum to Mr. Rigby. There was a great number of legacies, none of superior amount, most of them of less: these were chiefly left to old male companions, and women in various countries.

There was an almost inconceivable number of small annuities to faithful servants, decayed actors, and obscure foreigners. The residue of his personal estate was left to four gentlemen, three of whom had quitted this world before the legator; the bequests, therefore, had lapsed. The fourth residuary legatee, in whom, according to the terms of the will, all would have consequently centred, was Mr. Rigby.

There followed several codicils which did not materially affect the previous disposition; one of them leaving a legacy of 20,000*l.* to the Princess Colonna; until they arrived at the latter part of the year 1832, when a codicil increased the 10,000*l.* left under the will to Coningsby to 50,000*l.*

After Coningsby's visit to the Castle in 1836 a very important change occurred in the disposition of Lord Monmouth's estate. The legacy of 50,000*l.* in his favour was revoked, and the same sum left to the Princess Lucretia. A similar amount was bequeathed to Mr. Rigby; and Coningsby was left sole residuary legatee.

The marriage led to a considerable modification. An estate of about nine thousand a year, which Lord Monmouth had himself purchased, and was therefore in his own disposition, was left to Coningsby. The legacy to Mr. Rigby was reduced to 20,000*l.*, and the whole of his residue left to his issue by Lady Monmouth. In case he died without issue, the estate bequeathed to Coningsby to be taken into account, and the residue then to be divided equally between Lady Monmouth and his grandson. It was under this instrument that Sidonia had been appointed an executor and to whom Lord Monmouth left, among others, the celebrated picture of the Holy Family by Murillo,

as his friend had often admired it. To Lord Eskdale he left all his female miniatures, and to Mr. Ormsby his rare and splendid collection of French novels, and all his wines, except his Tokay, which he left, with his library, to Sir Robert Peel; though this legacy was afterwards revoked, in consequence of Sir Robert's conduct about the Irish corporations.

The solicitor paused and begged permission to send for a glass of water. While this was arranging there was a murmur at the lower part of the room, but little disposition to conversation among those in the vicinty of the lawyer. Coningsby was silent, his brow a little knit. Mr. Rigby was pale and restless, but said nothing. Mr. Ormsby took a pinch of snuff, and offered his box to Lord Eskdale, who was next to him. They exchanged glances, and made some observation about the weather. Sidonia stood apart, with his arms folded. He had not, of course, attended the funeral, nor had he as yet exchanged any recognition with Coningsby.

'Now, gentlemen,' said the solicitor, 'if you please, I will proceed.'

They came to the year 1839, the year Coningsby was at Hellingsley. This appeared to be a critical period in the fortunes of Lady Monmouth; while Coningsby's reached to the culminating point. Mr. Rigby was reduced to his original legacy under the will of 10,000*l.*; a sum of equal amount was bequeathed to Armand Villebecque, in acknowledgment of faithful services; all the dispositions in favour of Lady Monmouth were revoked, and she was limited to her moderate jointure of 3,000*l.* per annum, under the marriage settlement; while everything, without reserve, was left absolutely to Coningsby.

A subsequent codicil determined that the 10,000*l.* left to Mr. Rigby should be equally divided between him and Lucian Gay; but as some compensation Lord Monmouth left to the Right Honourable Nicholas Rigby the bust of that gentleman, which he had himself presented to his lordship, and which, at his desire, had been placed in the vestibule at Coningsby Castle, from the amiable motive that after Lord Monmouth's decease Mr. Rigby might wish, perhaps, to present it to some other friend.

Lord Eskdale and Mr. Ormsby took care not to catch the eye of Mr. Rigby. As for Coningsby, he saw nobody. He maintained, during the extraordinary situation in which he was placed, a firm demeanour; but serene and regulated as he appeared to the spectators, his nerves were really strung to a high pitch.

There was yet another codicil. It bore the date of June, 1840, and was made at Brighton, immediately after the separation with Lady Monmouth. It was the sight of this instrument that sustained Rigby at this great emergency. He had a wild conviction that, after all, it must set all right. He felt assured that, as Lady Monmouth had already been disposed of, it must principally refer to the disinheritance of Coningsby, secured by Rigby's well-timed and malignant misrepresentations of what had occurred in Lancashire during the preceding summer. And then to whom could Lord Monmouth leave his money? However he might cut and carve up his fortunes, Rigby, and especially at a moment when he had so served him, must come in for a considerable slice.

His prescient mind was right. All the dispositions in favour of 'my grandson Harry Coningsby' were

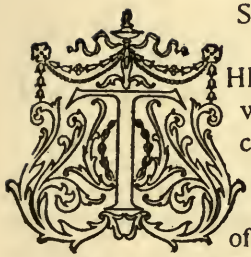
revoked; and he inherited from his grandfather only the interest of the sum of 10,000*l.* which had been originally bequeathed to him in his orphan boyhood. The executors had the power of investing the principal in any way they thought proper for his advancement in life, provided always it was not placed in 'the capital stock of any manufactory.'

Coningsby turned pale; he lost his abstracted look; he caught the eye of Rigby; he read the latent malice of that nevertheless anxious countenance. What passed through the mind and being of Coningsby was thought and sensation enough for a year; but it was as the flash that reveals a whole country, yet ceases to be ere one can say it lightens. There was a revelation to him of an inward power that should baffle these conventional calamities, a natural and sacred confidence in his youth and health, and knowledge and convictions. Even the recollection of Edith was not unaccompanied with some sustaining associations. At least the mightiest foe to their union was departed.

All this was the impression of an instant, simultaneous with the reading of the words of form with which the last testamentary disposition of the Marquess of Monmouth left the sum of 30,000*l.* to Armand Villebecque; and all the rest, residue, and remainder of his unentailed property, wheresoever, and whatsoever it might be, amounting in value to nearly a million sterling, was given, devised, and bequeathed to Flora, commonly called Flora Villebecque, the step-child of the said Armand Villebecque, 'but who is my natural daughter by Marie Estelle Matteau, an actress at the Théâtre Français in the years 1811–15, by the name of Stella.'

CHAPTER LXXII.

Sidonia's Advice.



'HIS is a crash!' said Coningsby, with a grave rather than agitated countenance, to Sidonia, as his friend came up to greet him, without, however, any expression of condolence.

'This time next year you will not think so,' said Sidonia.

Coningsby shrugged his shoulders.

'The principal annoyance of this sort of miscarriage,' said Sidonia, 'is the condolence of the gentle world. I think we may now depart. I am going home to dine. Come, and discuss your position. For the present we will not speak of it.' So saying, Sidonia good-naturedly got Coningsby out of the room.

They walked together to Sidonia's house in Carlton Gardens, neither of them making the slightest allusion to the catastrophe; Sidonia inquiring where he had been, what he had been doing, since they last met, and himself conversing in his usual vein, though with a little more feeling in his manner than was his custom. When they had arrived there, Sidonia ordered their dinner instantly, and during the interval

between the command and its appearance, he called Coningsby's attention to an old German painting he had just received, its brilliant colouring and quaint costumes.

'Eat, and an appetite will come,' said Sidonia, when he observed Coningsby somewhat reluctant. 'Take some of that Chablis: it will put you right; you will find it delicious.'

In this way some twenty minutes passed; their meal was over, and they were alone together.

'I have been thinking all this time of your position,' said Sidonia.

'A sorry one, I fear,' said Coningsby.

'I really cannot see that,' said his friend. 'You have experienced this morning a disappointment, but not a calamity. If you had lost your eye it would have been a calamity: no combination of circumstances could have given you another. There are really no miseries except natural miseries; conventional misfortunes are mere illusions. What seems conventionally, in a limited view, a great misfortune, if subsequently viewed in its results, is often the happiest incident in one's life.'

'I hope the day may come when I may feel this.'

'Now is the moment when philosophy is of use; that is to say, now is the moment when you should clearly comprehend the circumstances which surround you. Holiday philosophy is mere idleness. You think, for example, that you have just experienced a great calamity, because you have lost the fortune on which you counted?'

'I must say I do.'

'I ask you again, which would you have rather lost, your grandfather's inheritance or your right leg?'

'Most certainly my inheritance.'

'Or your left arm?'

'Still the inheritance.'

'Would you have received the inheritance on condition that your front teeth should be knocked out?'

'No.'

'Would you have given up a year of your life for that fortune trebled?'

'Even at twenty-three I would have refused the terms.'

'Come, come, Coningsby, the calamity cannot be very great.'

'Why, you have put it in an ingenious point of view; and yet it is not so easy to convince a man that he should be content who has lost everything.'

'You have a great many things at this moment that you separately prefer to the fortune that you have forfeited. How, then, can you be said to have lost everything?'

'What have I?' said Coningsby, despondingly.

'You have health, youth, good looks, great abilities, considerable knowledge, a fine courage, a lofty spirit, and no contemptible experience. With each of these qualities one might make a fortune; the combination ought to command the highest.'

'You console me,' said Coningsby, with a faint blush and a fainter smile.

'I teach you the truth. That is always solacing. I think you are a most fortunate young man; I should not have thought you more fortunate if you had been your grandfather's heir; perhaps less so. But I wish you to comprehend your position: if you understand it you will cease to lament.'

'But what should I do?'

'Bring your intelligence to bear on the right object. I make you no offers of fortune, because I know you would not accept them, and indeed I have no wish to see you a lounger in life. If you had inherited a great patrimony, it is possible your natural character and previous culture might have saved you from its paralysing influence; but it is a question, even with you. Now you are free; that is to say, you are free, if you are not in debt. A man who has not seen the world, whose fancy is harassed with glittering images of pleasures he has never experienced, cannot live on 300*l.* per annum; but you can. You have nothing to haunt your thoughts, or disturb the abstraction of your studies. You have seen the most beautiful women; you have banqueted in palaces; you know what heroes, and wits, and statesmen are made of: and you can draw on your memory instead of your imagination for all those dazzling and interesting objects that make the inexperienced restless, and are the cause of what are called scrapes. But you can do nothing if you be in debt. You must be free. Before, therefore, we proceed, I must beg you to be frank on this head. If you have any absolute or contingent incumbrances, tell me of them without reserve, and permit me to clear them at once to any amount. You will sensibly oblige me in so doing: because I am interested in watching your career, and if the racer start with a clog my psychological observations will be imperfect.'

'You are, indeed, a friend; and had I debts I would ask you to pay them. I have nothing of the kind. My grandfather was so lavish in his allowance to me that I never got into difficulties. Be-

sides there are horses and things without end which I must sell, and money at Drummonds'.'

'That will produce your outfit, whatever the course you adopt. I conceive there are two careers which deserve your consideration. In the first place there is diplomacy. If you decide upon that, I can assist you. There exist between me and the Minister such relations that I can at once secure you that first step which is so difficult to obtain. After that, much, if not all, depends on yourself. But I could advance you, provided you were capable. You should, at least, not languish for want of preferment. In an important post, I could throw in your way advantages which would soon permit you to control cabinets. Information commands the world. I doubt not your success, and for such a career, speedy. Let us assume it as a fact. Is it a result satisfactory? Suppose yourself in a dozen years a plenipotentiary at a chief court, or at a critical post, with a red ribbon and the Privy Council in immediate perspective; and, after a lengthened career, a pension and a peerage. Would that satisfy you? You don't look excited. I am hardly surprised. In your position it would not satisfy me. A diplomatist is, after all, a phantom. There is a want of nationality about his being. I always look upon diplomatists as the Hebrews of politics; without country, political creeds, popular convictions, that strong reality of existence which pervades the career of an eminent citizen in a free and great country.'

'You read my thoughts,' said Coningsby. 'I should be sorry to sever myself from England.'

'There remains then the other, the greater, the nobler career,' said Sidonia, 'which in England may

give you all, the Bar. I am absolutely persuaded that with the requisite qualifications, and with perseverance, success at the Bar is certain. It may be retarded or precipitated by circumstances, but cannot be ultimately affected. You have a right to count with your friends on no lack of opportunities when you are ripe for them. You appear to me to have all the qualities necessary for the Bar; and you may count on that perseverance which is indispensable, for the reason I have before mentioned, because it will be sustained by your experience.'

'I have resolved,' said Coningsby; 'I will try for the Great Seal.'

CHAPTER LXXIII.

Coningsby Sees the Heiress.

ALONE in his chambers, no longer under the sustaining influence of Sidonia's converse and counsel, the shades of night descending and bearing gloom to the gloomy, all the excitement of his spirit evaporated, the heart of Coningsby sank. All now depended on himself, and in that self he had no trust. Why should he succeed? Success was the most rare of results. Thousands fail; units triumph. And even success could only be conducted to him by the course of many years. His career, even if prosperous, was now to commence by the greatest sacrifice which the heart of man could be called upon to sustain. Upon the stern altar of his fortunes he must immolate his first and enduring love. Before, he had a perilous position to offer Edith; now he had none. The future might then have aided them; there was no combination which could improve his present. Under any circumstances he must, after all his thoughts and studies, commence a new novitiate, and before he could enter the arena must pass years of silent and obscure preparation. 'Twas very bitter. He looked up, his eye caught that drawing of the towers of Hellingsley

which she had given him in the days of their happy hearts. That was all that was to remain of their loves. He was to bear it to the future scene of his labours, to remind him through revolving years of toil and routine, that he too had had his romance, had roamed in fair gardens, and whispered in willing ears the secrets of his passion. That drawing was to become the altar-piece of his life.

Coningsby passed an agitated night of broken sleep, waking often with a consciousness of having experienced some great misfortune, yet with an indefinite conception of its nature. He woke exhausted and dispirited. It was a gloomy day, a raw north-easter blowing up the cloisters of the Albany, in which the fog was lingering, the newspaper on his breakfast-table, full of rumoured particulars of his grandfather's will, which had of course been duly digested by all who knew him. What a contrast to St. Geneviève! To the bright, bracing morn of that merry Christmas! That radiant and cheerful scene, and those gracious and beaming personages, seemed another world and order of beings to the one he now inhabited, and the people with whom he must now commune. The Great Seal indeed! It was the wild excitement of despair, the frenzied hope that blends inevitably with absolute ruin, that could alone have inspired such a hallucination! His unstrung heart deserted him. His energies could rally no more. He gave orders that he was at home to no one; and in his morning gown and slippers, with his feet resting on the fireplace, the once high-souled and noble-hearted Coningsby delivered himself up to despair.

The day passed in a dark trance rather than a reverie. Nothing rose to his consciousness. He was

like a particle of chaos; at the best, a glimmering entity of some shadowy Hades. Towards evening the wind changed, the fog dispersed, there came a clear starry night, brisk and bright. Coningsby roused himself, dressed, and wrapping his cloak around him, sallied forth. Once more in the mighty streets, surrounded by millions, his petty griefs and personal fortunes assumed their proper position. Well had Sidonia taught him: view everything in its relation to the rest. 'Tis the secret of all wisdom. Here was the mightiest of modern cities; the rival even of the most celebrated of the ancient. Whether he inherited or forfeited fortunes, what was it to the passing throng? They would not share his splendour, or his luxury, or his comfort. But a word from his lip, a thought from his brain, expressed at the right time, at the right place, might turn their hearts, might influence their passions, might change their opinions, might affect their destiny. Nothing is great but the personal. As civilisation advances, the accidents of life become each day less important. The power of man, his greatness and his glory, depend on essential qualities. Brains every day become more precious than blood. You must give men new ideas, you must teach them new words, you must modify their manners, you must change their laws, you must root out prejudices, subvert convictions, if you wish to be great. Greatness no longer depends on rentals, the world is too rich; nor on pedigrees, the world is too knowing.

'The greatness of this city destroys my misery,' said Coningsby, 'and my genius shall conquer its greatness!'

This conviction of power in the midst of despair was a revelation of intrinsic strength. It is indeed

the test of a creative spirit. From that moment all petty fears for an ordinary future quitted him. He felt that he must be prepared for great sacrifices, for infinite suffering; that there must devolve on him a bitter inheritance of obscurity, struggle, envy, and hatred, vulgar prejudice, base criticism, petty hostilities, but the dawn would break, and the hour arrive, when the welcome morning hymn of his success and his fame would sound and be re-echoed.

He returned to his rooms; calm, resolute. He slept the deep sleep of a man void of anxiety, that has neither hope nor fear to haunt his visions, but is prepared to rise on the morrow collected for the great human struggle.

And the morning came. Fresh, vigorous, not rash or precipitate, yet determined to lose no time in idle meditation, Coningsby already resolved at once to quit his present residence, was projecting a visit to some legal quarter, where he intended in future to reside, when his servant brought him a note. The handwriting was feminine. The note was from Flora. The contents were brief. She begged Mr. Coningsby, with great earnestness, to do her the honour and the kindness of calling on her at his earliest convenience, at the hotel in Brook Street where she now resided.

It was an interview which Coningsby would rather have avoided; yet it seemed to him, after a moment's reflection, neither just, nor kind, nor manly, to refuse her request. Flora had not injured him. She was, after all, his kin. Was it for a moment to be supposed that he was envious of her lot? He replied, therefore, that in an hour he would wait upon her.

In an hour, then, two individuals are to be brought together whose first meeting was held under circum-

stances most strangely different. Then Coningsby was the patron, a generous and spontaneous one, of a being obscure, almost friendless, and sinking under bitter mortification. His favour could not be the less appreciated because he was the chosen relative of a powerful noble. That noble was no more; his vast inheritance had devolved on the disregarded, even despised actress, whose suffering emotions Coningsby had then soothed, and whose fortune had risen on the destruction of all his prospects, and the balk of all his aspirations.

Flora was alone when Coningsby was ushered into the room. The extreme delicacy of her appearance was increased by her deep mourning; and seated in a cushioned chair, from which she seemed to rise with an effort, she certainly presented little of the character of a fortunate and prosperous heiress.

'You are very good to come to me,' she said, faintly smiling.

Coningsby extended his hand to her affectionately, in which she placed her own, looking down much embarrassed.

'You have an agreeable situation here,' said Coningsby, trying to break the first awkwardness of their meeting.

'Yes; but I hope not to stop here long.'

'You are going abroad?'

'No; I hope never to leave England!'

There was a slight pause; and then Flora sighed and said,

'I wish to speak to you on a subject that gives me pain; yet of which I must speak. You think I have injured you?'

'I am sure,' said Coningsby, in a tone of great kindness, 'that you could injure no one.'

'I have robbed you of your inheritance.'

'It was not my mine by any right, legal or moral. There were others who might have urged an equal claim to it; and there are many who will now think that you might have preferred a superior one.'

'You had enemies; I was not one. They sought to benefit themselves by injuring you. They have not benefited themselves; let them not say that they have at least injured you.'

'We will care not what they say,' said Coningsby; 'I can sustain my lot.'

'Would that I could mine!' said Flora. She sighed again with a downcast glance. Then looking up embarrassed and blushing deeply, she added, 'I wish to restore to you that fortune of which I have unconsciously and unwillingly deprived you.'

'The fortune is yours, dear Flora, by every right,' said Coningsby, much moved; 'and there is no one who wishes more fervently that it may contribute to your happiness than I do.'

'It is killing me,' said Flora, mournfully; then speaking with unusual animation, with a degree of excitement, she continued, 'I must tell what I feel. This fortune is yours. I am happy in the inheritance, if you generously receive it from me, because Providence has made me the means of baffling your enemies. I never thought to be so happy as I shall be if you will generously accept the fortune, always intended for you. I have lived then for a purpose; I have not lived in vain; I have returned to you some service, however humble, for all your goodness to me in my unhappiness.'

'You are, as I have ever thought you, the kindest and most tender-hearted of beings. But you miscon-

ceive our mutual positions, my gentle Flora. The custom of the world does not permit such acts to either of us as you contemplate. The fortune is yours. It is left you by one on whose affections you had the highest claim. I will not say that so large an inheritance does not bring with it an alarming responsibility; but you are not unequal to it. Have confidence in yourself. You have a good heart; you have good sense; you have a well-principled being. Your spirit will mount with your fortunes, and blend with them. You will be happy.'

'And you?'

'I shall soon learn to find content, if not happiness, from other sources,' said Coningsby; 'and mere riches, however vast, could at no time have secured my felicity.'

'But they may secure that which brings felicity,' said Flora, speaking in a choking voice, and not meeting the glance of Coningsby. 'You had some views in life which displeased him who has done all this; they may be, they must be, affected by this fatal caprice. Speak to me, for I cannot speak, dear Mr. Coningsby; do not let me believe that I, who would sacrifice my life for your happiness, am the cause of such calamities!'

'Whatever be my lot, I repeat I can sustain it,' said Coningsby, with a cheek of scarlet.

'Ah! he is angry with me,' exclaimed Flora; 'he is angry with me!' and the tears stole down her pale cheek.

'No, no, no! dear Flora; I have no other feelings to you than those of affection and respect,' and Coningsby, much agitated, drew his chair nearer to her, and took her hand. 'I am gratified by these kind

wishes, though they are utterly impracticable; but they are the witnesses of your sweet disposition and your noble spirit. There never shall exist between us, under any circumstances, other feelings than those of kin and kindness.'

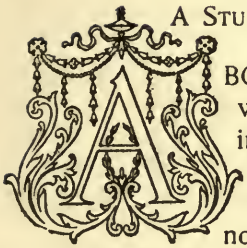
He rose as if to depart. When she saw that, she started, and seemed to summon all her energies.

'You are going,' she exclaimed, 'and I have said nothing, I have said nothing; and I shall never see you again. Let me tell you what I mean. This fortune is yours; it must be yours. It is an arrow in my heart. Do not think I am speaking from a momentary impulse. I know myself. I have lived so much alone, I have had so little to deceive or to delude me, that I know myself. If you will not let me do justice you declare my doom. I cannot live if my existence is the cause of all your prospects being blasted, and the sweetest dreams of your life being defeated. When I die, these riches will be yours; that you cannot prevent. Refuse my present offer, and you seal the fate of that unhappy Flora whose fragile life has hung for years on the memory of your kindness.'

'You must not say these words, dear Flora; you must not indulge in these gloomy feelings. You must live, and you must live happily. You have every charm and virtue which should secure happiness. The duties and the affections of existence will fall to your lot. It is one that will always interest me, for I shall ever be your friend. You have conferred on me one of the most delightful of feelings, gratitude, and for that I bless you. I will soon see you again.' Mournfully he bade her farewell.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

A Student of the Temple.



BOUT a week after this interview with Flora, as Coningsby one morning was about to sally forth from the Albany to visit some chambers in the Temple, to which his notice had been attracted, there was a loud ring, a bustle in the hall, and Henry Sydney and Buckhurst were ushered in.

There never was such a cordial meeting; and yet the faces of his friends were serious. The truth is, the paragraphs in the newspapers had circulated in the country, they had written to Coningsby, and after a brief delay he had confirmed their worst apprehensions. Immediately they came up to town. Henry Sydney, a younger son, could offer little but sympathy, but he declared it was his intention also to study for the Bar, so that they should not be divided. Buckhurst, after many embraces and some ordinary talk, took Coningsby aside, and said, 'My dear fellow, I have no objection to Henry Sydney hearing everything I say, but still these are subjects which men like to be discussed in private. Of course I expect you to share my fortune. There is enough for both. We will have an exact division.'

There was something in Buckhurst's fervent resolution very lovable and a little humorous, just enough to put one in good temper with human nature and life. If there were any fellow's fortune in the world that Coningsby would share, Buckhurst's would have had the preference; but while he pressed his hand, and with a glance in which a tear and a smile seemed to contend for mastery, he gently indicated why such arrangements were, with our present manners, impossible.

'I see,' said Buckhurst, after a moment's thought, 'I quite agree with you. The thing cannot be done; and, to tell you the truth, a fortune is a bore. What I vote that we three do at once is, to take plenty of ready money, and enter the Austrian service. By Jove! it is the only thing to do.'

'There is something in that,' said Coningsby. 'In the meantime, suppose you two fellows walk with me to the Temple, for I have an appointment to look at some chambers.'

It was a fine day, and it was by no means a gloomy walk. Though the two friends had arrived full of indignation against Lord Monmouth, and miserable about their companion, once more in his society, and finding little difference in his carriage, they assumed unconsciously their habitual tone. As for Buckhurst, he was delighted with the Temple, which he visited for the first time. The name enchanted him. The tombs in the church convinced him that the crusades were the only career. He would have himself become a law student if he might have prosecuted his studies in chain armour. The calmer Henry Sydney was consoled for the misfortunes of Coningsby by a fanciful project himself to

pass a portion of his life amid these halls and courts, gardens and terraces, that maintain in the heart of a great city in the nineteenth century, so much of the grave romance and picturesque decorum of our past manners. Henry Sydney was sanguine; he was reconciled to the disinheritance of Coningsby by the conviction that it was a providential dispensation to make him a Lord Chancellor.

These faithful friends remained in town with Coningsby until he was established in Paper Buildings, and had become a pupil of a celebrated special pleader. They would have remained longer had not he himself suggested that it was better that they should part. It seemed a terrible catastrophe after all the visions of their boyish days, their college dreams, and their dazzling adventures in the world.

'And this is the end of Coningsby, the brilliant Coningsby, that we all loved, that was to be our leader!' said Buckhurst to Lord Henry as they quitted him. 'Well, come what may, life has lost something of its bloom.'

'The great thing now,' said Lord Henry, 'is to keep up the chain of our friendship. We must write to him very often, and contrive to be frequently together. It is dreadful to think that in the ways of life our hearts may become estranged. I never felt more wretched than I do at this moment, and yet I have faith that we shall not lose him.'

'Amen!' said Buckhurst; 'but I feel my plan about the Austrian service was, after all, the only thing. The Continent offers a career. He might have been prime minister; several strangers have been; and as for war, look at Brown and Laudohn, and half a hundred others. I had a much better chance

of being a field-marshal than he has of being a Lord Chancellor.'

'I feel quite convinced that Coningsby will be Lord Chancellor,' said Henry Sydney, gravely.

This change of life for Coningsby was a great social revolution. It was sudden and complete. Within a month after the death of his grandfather his name had been erased from all his fashionable clubs, his horses and carriages sold, and he had become a student of the Temple. He entirely devoted himself to his new pursuit. His being was completely absorbed in it. There was nothing to haunt his mind; no unexperienced scene or sensation of life to distract his intelligence. One sacred thought alone indeed there remained, shrined in the innermost sanctuary of his heart and consciousness. But it was a tradition, no longer a hope. The moment that he had fairly recovered from the first shock of his grandfather's will; had clearly ascertained the consequences to himself, and had resolved on the course to pursue, he had communicated unreservedly with Oswald Millbank, and had renounced those pretensions to the hand of his sister which it ill became the destitute to prefer.

His letter was answered in person. Millbank met Henry Sydney and Buckhurst at the chambers of Coningsby. Once more they were all four together; but under what different circumstances, and with what different prospects from those which attended their separation at Eton! Alone with Coningsby, Millbank spoke to him things which letters could not convey. He bore to him all the sympathy and devotion of Edith; but they would not conceal from themselves that, at this moment, and in the present state

of affairs, all was hopeless. In no way did Coningsby ever permit himself to intimate to Oswald the cause of his disinheritance. He was, of course, silent on it to his other friends; as any communication of the kind must have touched on a subject that was consecrated in his inmost soul.

CHAPTER LXXV.

The New Member for Darlford.

THE state of political parties in England in the spring of 1841 offered a most remarkable contrast to their condition at the period commemorated in the first chapter of this work. The banners of the Conservative camp at this moment lowered on the Whig forces, as the gathering host of the Norman invader frowned on the coast of Sussex. The Whigs were not yet conquered, but they were doomed; and they themselves knew it. The mistake which was made by the Conservative leaders in not retaining office in 1839; and, whether we consider their conduct in a national and constitutional light, or as a mere question of political tactics and party prudence, it was unquestionably a great mistake; had infused into the corps of Whig authority a kind of galvanic action, which only the superficial could mistake for vitality. Even to form a basis for their future operations, after the conjuncture of '39, the Whigs were obliged to make a fresh inroad on the revenue, the daily increasing debility of which was now arresting attention and exciting public alarm. It was clear that the catastrophe of the government would be financial.

Under all the circumstances of the case, the conduct of the Whig Cabinet, in their final propositions, cannot be described as deficient either in boldness or prudence. The policy which they recommended was in itself a sagacious and spirited policy; but they erred in supposing that, at the period it was brought forward, any measure promoted by the Whigs could have obtained general favour in the country. The Whigs were known to be feeble; they were looked upon as tricksters. The country knew they were opposed by a powerful party; and though there certainly never was any authority for the belief, the country did believe that that powerful party were influenced by great principles; had in their view a definite and national policy; and would secure to England, instead of a feeble administration and fluctuating opinions, energy and a creed.

The future effect of the Whig propositions of '41 will not be detrimental to that party, even if in the interval they be appropriated piecemeal, as will probably be the case, by their Conservative successors. But for the moment, and in the plight in which the Whig party found themselves, it was impossible to have devised measures more conducive to their precipitate fall. Great interests were menaced by a weak government. The consequence was inevitable. Tadpole and Taper saw it in a moment. They snuffed the factious air, and felt the coming storm. Notwithstanding the extreme congeniality of these worthies, there was a little latent jealousy between them. Tadpole worshipped registration: Taper adored a cry. Tadpole always maintained that it was the winnowing of the electoral lists that could alone gain the day; Taper, on the contrary, faithful to ancient tra-

ditions, was ever of opinion that the game must ultimately be won by popular clamour. It always seemed so impossible that the Conservative party could ever be popular, the extreme graciousness and personal popularity of the leaders not being sufficiently apparent to be esteemed an adequate set-off against the inveterate odium that attached to their opinions, that the Tadpole philosophy was the favoured tenet in high places; and Taper had had his knuckles well rapped more than once for manœuvring too actively against the New Poor-Law, and for hiring several link-boys to bawl a much-wronged lady's name in the Park when the Court prorogued Parliament.

And now, after all, in 1841, it seemed that Taper was right. There was a great clamour in every quarter, and the clamour was against the Whigs and in favour of Conservative principles. What Canadian timber-merchants meant by Conservative principles, it is not difficult to conjecture; or West Indian planters. It was tolerably clear on the hustings what squires and farmers, and their followers, meant by Conservative principles. What they mean by Conservative principles now is another question: and whether Conservative principles mean something higher than a perpetuation of fiscal arrangements, some of them impolitic, none of them important. But no matter what different bodies of men understood by the cry in which they all joined, the cry existed. Taper beat Tadpole; and the great Conservative party beat the shattered and exhausted Whigs.

Notwithstanding the abstraction of his legal studies, Coningsby could not be altogether insensible to the political crisis. In the political world of course he never mixed, but the friends of his boyhood were

deeply interested in affairs, and they lost no opportunity which he would permit them, of cultivating his society. Their occasional fellowship, a visit now and then to Sidonia, and a call sometimes on Flora, who lived at Richmond, comprised his social relations. His general acquaintance did not desert him, but he was out of sight, and did not wish to be remembered. Mr. Ormsby asked him to dinner, and occasionally mourned over his fate in the bow window of White's; while Lord Eskdale even went to see him in the Temple, was interested in his progress, and said, with an encouraging look, that, when he was called to the Bar, all his friends must join and get up the steam. Coningsby had once met Mr. Rigby, who was walking with the Duke of Agincourt, which was probably the reason he could not notice a lawyer. Mr. Rigby cut Coningsby.

Lord Eskdale had obtained from Villebecque accurate details as to the cause of Coningsby being disinherited. Our hero, if one in such fallen fortunes may still be described as a hero, had mentioned to Lord Eskdale his sorrow that his grandfather had died in anger with him, but Lord Eskdale, without dwelling on the subject, had assured him that he had reason to believe that if Lord Monmouth had lived, affairs would have been different. He had altered the disposition of his property at a moment of great and general irritation and excitement; and had been too indolent, perhaps really too indisposed, which he was unwilling ever to acknowledge, to recur to a calmer and more equitable settlement. Lord Eskdale had been more frank with Sidonia, and had told him all about the refusal to become a candidate for Darlford against Mr. Millbank; the communication of Rigby to

Lord Monmouth, as to the presence of Oswald Millbank at the Castle, and the love of Coningsby for his sister; all these details, furnished by Villebecque to Lord Eskdale, had been truly transferred by that nobleman to his co-executor; and Sidonia, when he had sufficiently digested them, had made Lady Wallinger acquainted with the whole history.

The dissolution of the Whig Parliament by the Whigs, the project of which had reached Lord Monmouth a year before, and yet in which nobody believed to the last moment, at length took place. All the world was dispersed in the heart of the season, and our solitary student of the Temple, in his lonely chambers, notwithstanding all his efforts, found his eye rather wander over the pages of Tidd and Chitty as he remembered that the great event to which he had so looked forward was now occurring, and he, after all, was no actor in the mighty drama. It was to have been the epoch of his life; when he was to have found himself in that proud position for which all the studies, and meditations, and higher impulses of his nature had been preparing him. It was a keen trial of a man. Every one of his friends and old companions were candidates, and with sanguine prospects. Lord Henry was certain for a division of his county; Buckhurst harangued a large agricultural borough in his vicinity; Eustace Lyle and Vere stood in coalition for a Yorkshire town; and Oswald Millbank solicited the suffrages of an important manufacturing constituency. They sent their addresses to Coningsby. He was deeply interested as he traced in them the influence of his own mind; often recognised the very expressions to which he had habituated them. Amid the confusion of a general election,

no unimpassioned critic had time to canvass the language of an address to an isolated constituency; yet an intelligent speculator on the movements of political parties might have detected in these public declarations some intimation of new views, and of a tone of political feeling that has unfortunately been too long absent from the public life of this country.

It was the end of a sultry July day, the last ray of the sun shooting down Pall Mall sweltering with dust; there was a crowd round the doors of the Carlton and the Reform Clubs, and every now and then an express arrived with the agitating bulletin of a fresh defeat or a new triumph. Coningsby was walking up Pall Mall. He was going to dine at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, the only club on whose list he had retained his name, that he might occasionally have the pleasure of meeting an Eton or Cambridge friend without the annoyance of encountering any of his former fashionable acquaintances. He lighted in his walk on Mr. Tadpole and Mr. Taper, both of whom he knew. The latter did not notice him, but Mr. Tadpole, more good-natured, bestowed on him a rough nod, not unmarked by a slight expression of coarse pity.

Coningsby ordered his dinner, and then took up the evening papers, where he learnt the return of Vere and Lyle; and read a speech of Buckhurst denouncing the Venetian Constitution, to the amazement of several thousand persons, apparently not a little terrified by this unknown danger, now first introduced to their notice. Being true Englishmen, they were all against Buckhurst's opponent, who was of the Venetian party, and who ended by calling out Buckhurst for his personalities.

Coningsby had dined, and was reading in the library, when a waiter brought up a third edition of the *Sun,* with electioneering bulletins from the manufacturing districts to the very latest hour. Some large letters which expressed the name of Darlford caught his eye. There seemed great excitement in that borough; strange proceedings had happened. The column was headed, 'Extraordinary Affair! Withdrawal of the Liberal Candidate! Two Tory Candidates in the field!!!'

His eye glanced over an animated speech of Mr. Millbank, his countenance changed, his heart palpitated. Mr. Millbank had resigned the representation of the town, but not from weakness; his avocations demanded his presence; he had been requested to let his son supply his place, but his son was otherwise provided for; he should always take a deep interest in the town and trade of Darlford; he hoped that the link between the borough and Hellingsley would be ever cherished; loud cheering; he wished in parting from them to take a step which should conciliate all parties, put an end to local heats and factious contentions, and secure the town an able and worthy representative. For these reasons he begged to propose to them a gentleman who bore a name which many of them greatly honoured; for himself, he knew the individual, and it was his firm opinion that whether they considered his talents, his character, or the ancient connection of his family with the district, he could not propose a candidate more worthy of their confidence than Harry Coningsby, Esq.

This proposition was received with that wild enthusiasm which occasionally bursts out in the most

civilised communities. The contest between Millbank and Rigby was equally balanced, neither party was over-confident. The Conservatives were not particularly zealous in behalf of their champion; there was no Marquess of Monmouth and no Coningsby Castle now to back him; he was fighting on his own resources, and he was a beaten horse. The Liberals did not like the prospect of a defeat, and dreaded the mortification of Rigby's triumph. The Moderate men, who thought more of local than political circumstances, liked the name of Coningsby. Mr. Millbank had dexterously prepared his leading supporters for the substitution. Some traits of the character and conduct of Coningsby had been cleverly circulated. Thus there was a combination of many favourable causes in his favour. In half an hour's time his image was stamped on the brain of every inhabitant of the borough as an interesting and accomplished youth, who had been wronged, and who deserved to be rewarded. It was whispered that Rigby was his enemy. Magog Wrath and his mob offered Mr. Millbank's committee to throw Mr. Rigby into the river, or to burn down his hotel, in case he was prudent enough not to show. Mr. Rigby determined to fight to the last. All his hopes were now staked on the successful result of this contest. It were impossible if he were returned that his friends could refuse him high office. The whole of Lord Monmouth's reduced legacy was devoted to this end. The third edition of the *Sun* left Mr. Rigby in vain attempting to address an infuriated populace.

Here was a revolution in the fortunes of our forlorn Coningsby! When his grandfather first sent for him to Monmouth House, his destiny was not verging

on greater vicissitudes. He rose from his seat, and was surprised that all the silent gentlemen who were about him did not mark his agitation. Not an individual there that he knew. It was now an hour to midnight, and to-morrow the almost unconscious candidate was to go to the poll. In a tumult of suppressed emotion, Coningsby returned to his chambers. He found a letter in his box from Oswald Millbank, who had been twice at the Temple. Oswald had been returned without a contest, and had reached Darlford in time to hear Coningsby nominated. He set off instantly to London, and left at his friend's chambers a rapid narrative of what had happened, with information that he should call on him again on the morrow at nine o'clock, when they were to repair together immediately to Darlford in time for Coningsby to be chaired, for no one entertained a doubt of his triumph.

Coningsby did not sleep a wink that night, and yet when he rose early felt fresh enough for any exploit, however difficult or hazardous. He felt as an Egyptian does when the Nile rises after its elevation had been despaired of. At the very lowest ebb of his fortunes, an event had occurred which seemed to restore all. He dared not contemplate the ultimate result of all these wonderful changes. Enough for him, that when all seemed dark, he was about to be returned to Parliament by the father of Edith, and his vanquished rival who was to bite the dust before him was the author of all his misfortunes. Love, Vengeance, Justice, the glorious pride of having acted rightly, the triumphant sense of complete and absolute success, here were chaotic materials from which order was at length evolved; and all subsided in an over-

whelming feeling of gratitude to that Providence that had so signally protected him.

There was a knock at the door. It was Oswald. They embraced. It seemed that Oswald was as excited as Coningsby. His eye sparkled, his manner was energetic.

'We must talk it all over during our journey. We have not a minute to spare.'

During that journey Coningsby learnt something of the course of affairs which gradually had brought about so singular a revolution in his favour. We mentioned that Sidonia had acquired a thorough knowledge of the circumstances which had occasioned and attended the disinheritance of Coningsby. These he had told to Lady Wallinger, first by letter, afterwards in more detail on her arrival in London. Lady Wallinger had conferred with her husband. She was not surprised at the goodness of Coningsby, and she sympathised with all his calamities. He had ever been the favourite of her judgment, and her romance had always consisted in blending his destinies with those of her beloved Edith. Sir Joseph was a judicious man, who never cared to commit himself; a little selfish, but good, just, and honourable, with some impulses, only a little afraid of them; but then his wife stepped in like an angel, and gave them the right direction. They were both absolutely impressed with Coningsby's admirable conduct, and Lady Wallinger was determined that her husband should express to others the convictions which he acknowledged in unison with herself. Sir Joseph spoke to Mr. Millbank who stared; but Sir Joseph spoke feebly. Lady Wallinger conveyed all this intelligence, and all her impressions, to Oswald and Edith. The younger Millbank talked

with his father, who, making no admissions, listened with interest, inveighed against Lord Monmouth, and condemned his will.

After some time, Mr. Millbank made inquiries about Coningsby, took an interest in his career, and, like Lord Eskdale, declared that when he was called to the Bar, his friends would have an opportunity to evince their sincerity. Affairs remained in this state, until Oswald thought that circumstances were sufficiently ripe to urge his father on the subject. The position which Oswald had assumed at Millbank had necessarily made him acquainted with the affairs and fortune of his father. When he computed the vast wealth which he knew was at his parent's command, and recalled Coningsby in his humble chambers, toiling after all his noble efforts without any results, and his sister pining in a provincial solitude, Oswald began to curse wealth, and to ask himself what was the use of all their marvellous industry and supernatural skill? He addressed his father with that irresistible frankness which a strong faith can alone inspire. What are the objects of wealth, if not to bless those who possess our hearts? The only daughter, the friend to whom the only son was indebted for his life, here are two beings surely whom one would care to bless, and both are unhappy. Mr. Millbank listened without prejudice, for he was already convinced. But he felt some interest in the present conduct of Coningsby. A Coningsby working for his bread was a novel incident for him. He wished to be assured of its authenticity. He was resolved to convince himself of the fact. And perhaps he would have gone on yet for a little time, and watched the progress of the experiment, already interested and de-

lighted by what had reached him, had not the dissolution brought affairs to a crisis. The misery of Oswald at the position of Coningsby, the silent sadness of Edith, his own conviction, which assured him that he could do nothing wiser or better than take this young man to his heart, so ordained it that Mr. Millbank, who was after all the creature of impulse, decided suddenly, and decided rightly. Never making a single admission to all the representations of his son, Mr. Millbank in a moment did all that his son could have dared to desire.

This is a very imperfect and crude intimation of what had occurred at Millbank and Hellingsley; yet it conveys a faint sketch of the enchanting intelligence that Oswald conveyed to Coningsby during their rapid travel. When they arrived at Birmingham, they found a messenger and a despatch, informing Coningsby, that at mid-day, at Darlford, he was at the head of the poll by an overwhelming majority, and that Mr. Rigby had resigned. He was, however, requested to remain at Birmingham, as they did not wish him to enter Darlford, except to be chaired, so he was to arrive there in the morning. At Birmingham, therefore, they remained.

There was Oswald's election to talk of as well as Coningsby's. They had hardly had time for this. Now they were both Members of Parliament. Men must have been at school together to enjoy the real fun of meeting thus and realising boyish dreams. Often, years ago, they had talked of these things, and assumed these results; but those were words and dreams, these were positive facts; after some doubts and struggles, in the freshness of their youth, Oswald Millbank and Harry Coningsby were members of the

British Parliament; public characters, responsible agents, with a career.

This afternoon, at Birmingham, was as happy an afternoon as usually falls to the lot of man. Both of these companions were labouring under that degree of excitement which is necessary to felicity. They had enough to talk about. Edith was no longer a forbidden or a sorrowful subject. There was rapture in their again meeting under such circumstances. Then there were their friends; that dear Buckhurst, who had just been called out for styling his opponent a Venetian, and all their companions of early days. What a sudden and marvellous change in all their destinies! Life was a pantomime; the wand was waved, and it seemed that the schoolfellows had of a sudden become elements of power, springs of the great machine.

A train arrived; restless they sallied forth, to seek diversion in the dispersion of the passengers. Coningsby and Millbank, with that glance, a little inquisitive, even impertinent, if we must confess it, with which one greets a stranger when he emerges from a public conveyance, were lounging on the platform. The train arrived; stopped; the doors were thrown open, and from one of them emerged Mr. Rigby! Coningsby, who had dined, was greatly tempted to take off his hat and make him a bow, but he refrained. Their eyes met. Rigby was dead beat. He was evidently used up; a man without a resource; the sight of Coningsby his last blow; he had met his fate.

'My dear fellow,' said Coningsby, 'I remember I wanted you to dine with my grandfather at Montem, and that fellow would not ask you. Such is life!'

About eleven o'clock the next morning they arrived at the Darlford station. Here they were met by an anxious deputation, who received Coningsby as if he were a prophet, and ushered him into a car covered with satin and blue ribbons, and drawn by six beautiful grey horses, caparisoned in his colours, and ridden by postilions, whose very whips were blue and white. Triumphant music sounded; banners waved; the multitude were marshalled; the Freemasons, at the first opportunity, fell into the procession; the Odd Fellows joined it at the nearest corner. Preceded and followed by thousands, with colours flying, trumpets sounding, and endless huzzas, flags and handkerchiefs waving from every window, and every balcony filled with dames and maidens bedecked with his colours, Coningsby was borne through enthusiastic Darlford like Paulus Emilius returning from Macedon. Uncovered, still in deep mourning, his fine figure and graceful bearing, and his intelligent brow, at once won every female heart.

The singularity was, that all were of the same opinion: everybody cheered him, every house was adorned with his colours. His triumphal return was no party question. Magog Wrath and Bully Bluck walked together like lambs at the head of his procession.

The car stopped before the principal hotel in the High Street. It was Mr. Millbank's committee. The broad street was so crowded, that, as every one declared, you might have walked on the heads of the people. Every window was full; the very roofs were peopled. The car stopped, and the populace gave three cheers for Mr. Millbank. Their late member, surrounded by his friends, stood in the balcony, which

was fitted up with Coningsby's colours, and bore his name on the hangings in gigantic letters formed of dahlias. The flashing and inquiring eye of Coningsby caught the form of Edith, who was leaning on her father's arm.

The hustings were opposite the hotel, and here, after a while, Coningsby was carried, and, stepping from his car, took up his post to address, for the first time, a public assembly. Anxious as the people were to hear him, it was long before their enthusiasm could subside into silence. At length that silence was deep and absolute. He spoke; his powerful and rich tones reached every ear. In five minutes' time every one looked at his neighbour, and without speaking they agreed that there never was anything like this heard in Darlford before.

He addressed them for a considerable time, for he had a great deal to say; not only to express his gratitude for the unprecedented manner in which he had become their representative, and for the spirit in which they had greeted him, but he had to offer them no niggard exposition of the views and opinions of the member whom they had so confidingly chosen, without even a formal declaration of his sentiments.

He did this with so much clearness, and in a manner so pointed and popular, that the deep attention of the multitude never wavered. His lively illustrations kept them often in continued merriment. But when, towards his close, he drew some picture of what he hoped might be the character of his future and lasting connection with the town, the vast throng was singularly affected. There were a great many present at that moment who, though they had never seen Coningsby before, would willingly have

then died for him. Coningsby had touched their hearts, for he had spoken from his own. His spirit had entirely magnetised them. Darlford believed in Coningsby: and a very good creed.

And now Coningsby was conducted to the opposite hotel. He walked through the crowd. The progress was slow, as every one wished to shake hands with him. His friends, however, at last safely landed him. He sprang up the stairs; he was met by Mr. Millbank, who welcomed him with the greatest warmth, and offered his hearty congratulations.

'It is to you, dear sir, that I am indebted for all this,' said Coningsby.

'No,' said Mr. Millbank, 'it is to your own high principles, great talents, and good heart.'

After he had been presented by the late member to the principal personages in the borough, Mr. Millbank said,

'I think we must now give Mr. Coningsby a little rest. Come with me,' he added, 'here is some one who will be very glad to see you.'

Speaking thus, he led our hero a little away, and placing his arm in Coningsby's with great affection opened the door of an apartment. There was Edith, radiant with loveliness and beaming with love. Their agitated hearts told at a glance the tumult of their joy. The father joined their hands, and blessed them with words of tenderness.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

Joy and Sadness.

HE marriage of Coningsby and Edith took place early in the autumn. It was solemnised at Millbank, and they passed their first moon at Hellingsley, which place was in future to be the residence of the member for Darlford. The estate was to devolve to Coningsby after the death of Mr. Millbank, who in the meantime made arrangements which permitted the newly-married couple to reside at the Hall in a manner becoming its occupants. All these settlements, as Mr. Millbank assured Coningsby, were effected not only with the sanction, but at the express instance, of his son.

An event, however, occurred not very long after the marriage of Coningsby, which rendered this generous conduct of his father-in-law no longer necessary to his fortunes, though he never forgot its exercise. The gentle and unhappy daughter of Lord Monmouth quitted a scene with which her spirit had never greatly sympathised. Perhaps she might have lingered in life for yet a little while, had it not been for that fatal inheritance which disturbed her peace and em-

bittered her days, haunting her heart with the recollection that she had been the unconscious instrument of injuring the only being whom she loved, and embarrassing and encumbering her with duties foreign to her experience and her nature. The marriage of Coningsby had greatly affected her, and from that day she seemed gradually to decline. She died towards the end of the autumn, and, subject to an ample annuity to Villebecque, she bequeathed the whole of her fortune to the husband of Edith. Gratifying as it was to him to present such an inheritance to his wife, it was not without a pang that he received the intelligence of the death of Flora. Edith sympathised in his affectionate feelings, and they raised a monument to her memory in the gardens of Hellingsley.

Coningsby passed his next Christmas in his own hall, with his beautiful and gifted wife by his side, and surrounded by the friends of his heart and his youth.

They stand now on the threshold of public life. They are in the leash, but in a moment they will be slipped. What will be their fate? Will they maintain in august assemblies and high places the great truths which, in study and in solitude, they have embraced? Or will their courage exhaust itself in the struggle, their enthusiasm evaporate before hollow-hearted ridicule, their generous impulses yield with a vulgar catastrophe to the tawdry temptations of a low ambition? Will their skilled intelligence subside into being the adroit tool of a corrupt party? Will vanity confound their fortunes, or jealousy wither their sympathies? Or will they remain brave, single, and true; refuse to bow before shadows and worship phrases; sensible of the greatness of their position, recognise

the greatness of their duties; denounce to a perplexed and disheartened world the frigid theories of a generalising age that have destroyed the individuality of man, and restore the happiness of their country by believing in their own energies, and daring to be great?

SELECTED SPEECHES

SPEECH AT HIGH WYCOMBE, December 16, 1834.

The Crisis Examined.

[In November, 1834, on the removal of Lord Althorp to the Upper House, King William IV., instead of listening to the proposed reconstruction of the Whig ministry, entrusted the Duke of Wellington with the formation of a new one. Sir Robert Peel was at once summoned from Rome; and it was understood that a dissolution of Parliament would take place as soon as he returned. Mr. Disraeli again presented himself to the electors of High Wycombe, and delivered the following speech, afterwards reprinted with the title of 'The Crisis Examined.' Fully to comprehend a speech of this description, the reader must himself have mingled in the transactions recorded in it, and retain a lively recollection of the political passions as well as of the club gossip which at this particular period agitated or amused society. Without this knowledge it must necessarily appear in many passages far-fetched and exaggerated.]

ENTLEMEN,—A considerable period has elapsed since I last had the honour of addressing you within these walls; and in that interval great revolutions have occurred—revolutions of government and revolutions of opinion: I can, however, assure you that I remain unchanged. I appear before you this day influenced by the same sentiments that I have ever professed, and actuated by the same principles I have ever advocated. There are some among my support-

ers who have deprecated this meeting; who have believed that I stood in so favourable a position as regarded the final result of this contest, that to move might perhaps endanger it; who, observing that I was supported by individuals of different opinions, and hitherto of different parties, were fearful that in hazarding explanation, I might hazard discomfiture. But, gentlemen, unless I enter Parliament with a clear explanation of my views, there is little chance of my acting with profit to you or with credit to myself. I cannot condescend to obtain even that distinguished honour by jesuitical intrigue or casuistical cajolery; I cannot condescend at the same time to be supported by the Tories because they deem me a Tory, and by the Liberals because they hold me a Liberal; I cannot stoop to deception, or submit to delusion.

It is the fashion to style the present moment an extraordinary crisis. I will not quarrel with the phrase. The times are, indeed, remarkable; we have a new administration just formed, a new Parliament immediately threatened. It is therefore incumbent on the constituent body throughout the empire to prepare and to resolve upon the course expedient to pursue. Hoping, even believing, that I shall be your representative, I will venture to offer to your consideration the course of policy which, under existing circumstances, I think it the duty of an administration to pursue. And, in the first place, I think that administration should be based upon a determination to reduce the burthens, to redress the grievances, and to maintain the rights of the people. I will not, however, shelter myself, and certainly I do not wish them to shield themselves, under a declaration so vague. Let us, therefore, be definite. I think the

necessary measures may be classed under four heads: Financial Relief, Ecclesiastical Reform, Sectarian Reform, and Corporate Reform. I will consider the Irish question as collateral to the general one of Ecclesiastical Reform.

As to Financial Relief, I am of opinion that the agricultural interest, at the present moment, is more entitled than any other class to whatever boon the minister may spare. All who hear me know, and most who hear me feel, that that interest is fearfully depressed. We may hope, therefore, that the Exchequer may grant them at least the partial relief of the malt tax, although I recommend them to petition for the whole. I would not at the same time make a request and intimate a compromise. As for any further relief that may be conceded us, I am always an advocate, in spite of political economists, for the abolition of direct taxes. I hope, therefore, the window tax will soon disappear; it is a tax the most onerous and the most unjust. Further relief we cannot certainly now anticipate.

I approach now the solemn subject of Ecclesiastical Reform. Church Reform, gentlemen, is the popular cry of the country: and when I recall the desperate professions that have been made, and the abortive measures that have been prepared upon this subject, I confess I recoil from a cant phrase which only reminds me of the intrigues of ignorant faction, or the wily projects of the protectors of vested rights. I hope the time approaches when we may hear less of Church reform, and more of Church improvement. I deem it absolutely necessary that pluralities should be abolished, and that the great and consequent evil of non-residence should be terminated for ever. It is, perhaps,

unnecessary for me to observe that I cannot conceive that this all-important object can be obtained without increasing the value of the lesser livings, and the incomes in general of the inferior clergy. Ecclesiastical reform naturally and necessarily draws our attention to Ireland—a name fatal to so many Governments.

I deem it absolutely necessary, even for the existence of the Protestant Establishment itself, that the question of the Irish Church should be forthwith grappled with; that it should be the object of a measure in its nature as final, in its operation as conclusive, as human wit can devise. It is now impossible to avoid, and too late to postpone it; it must be met immediately—the question is, how may it be met efficiently? Twelve months, therefore, must not pass over without the very name of tithes in that country being abolished for ever; nor do I deem it less urgent that the Protestant Establishment in that country should be at once proportioned to the population which it serves. But, gentlemen, I for one will never consent that the surplus revenues of that branch of our Establishment shall ever be appropriated to any other object save the interests of the Church of England, because experience has taught me that an establishment is never despoiled except to benefit an aristocracy. It is the interest of the people to support the Church, for the Church is their patrimony, their only hereditary property; it is their portal to power, their avenue to learning, to distinction, and to honour. I see no reason why the surplus revenues of the Church of England in Ireland should not be placed in trust of the prelates of that land, and of lay trustees, for the purpose of advancing the propagation of the Protestant faith in Ireland by all salutary and sa-

cred means. We may fail, gentlemen, in this great end, but failure under such circumstances is preferable in my mind to seeing this property, hallowed by its original consecration to the purposes of religion, of learning, and of charity, in the ruthless and rapacious grasp of some bold absentee baron. I know the love that great lords, and especially Whig lords, have for abbey lands and great tithes, but I remember Woburn, and I profit by the reminiscence. As I am upon the subject of Ireland, I will at once declare that I see no chance of tranquillity and welfare for that impoverished and long distracted land, until the Irish people enjoy the right to which the people of all countries are entitled—namely, to be maintained by the soil that they cultivate by their labour. I cannot find terms to express my sense of the injustice and the impolicy, the folly and the wickedness, of any longer denying to Ireland the consolation and the blessing of a well-regulated system of poor-laws. But not, gentlemen, that system which has recently made all England thrill with feelings of horror and indignation, as they wept over the simple, though harrowing, tale of the sufferings of our unhappy neighbours at Bledlow.*

Under the head of Sectarian Reform I approach the delicate subject of the claims of the Dissenters. In my opinion these are claims which must not be eluded by any Government that wishes to stand. I would grant every claim of this great body that the spirit of the most comprehensive toleration required,

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*A village near Wycombe, where the alleged ill-treatment of some labouring men by the parish authorities had recently attracted the attention of the London papers.

consistent with the established constitution of the country. Therefore, I think that the Registration and the Marriage claims should be conceded. As for the question of the church-rate, it is impossible that we can endure that every time one is levied, a town should present the scene of a contested election. The rights of the Establishment must be respected, but, for the sake of the Establishment itself, that flagrant scandal must be removed. These are concessions which, I think, are due to a numerous and powerful portion of our fellow-subjects; due, I repeat, to their numbers, their intelligence, and their property, and consistent, in my opinion, with the maintenance of an Established Church, a blessing with which I am not prepared to part, and which I am resolved to uphold, because I consider it a guaranty of civilisation, and a barrier against bigotry.

I now arrive at the fourth head under which I classed the measures, in my opinion, necessary to be adopted by the Government, Corporate Reform: a subject, I believe, very interesting to those I am now addressing. I am of opinion that a municipality should be formed upon the model of that mixed constitution which experience has proved to be at the same time so efficient and so beneficial. I am desirous that the burgesses should be elected by the general body of inhabitants of a town, subject, of course, to certain limitations and restrictions; that the aldermen should be elected by the burgesses, and serve the office of mayor in rotation; for I never will consent that the mayors and returning officers of boroughs shall be appointed by the Crown. This is part and parcel of the Whig system of centralisation, fatal to rural prosperity and provincial independence—one of

those Gallic imitations of which they are so fond, but which, I hope, the sense, and spirit, and love of freedom of Englishmen will always resist. Paris decides upon the fate of France, but I hope we may continue to receive our morning papers by the Oxford coach without acknowledging a ukase in every leading article and recognising a revolution in every riot.

Gentlemen, I need not, I am sure, remind you that peace and economy are two things without which no Government could now exist four-and-twenty hours. The question for you to decide this day is, whether, if a Government be prepared to adopt and carry similar measures to those I have detailed, and are determined to support, with their utmost energy and resolution, everything which may tend to the improvement and amelioration of the society of this realm — whether under these circumstances your representative in Parliament is to support such a Government?

I am glad to hear that cheer. You are not ignorant that a contrary axiom is now laboriously propagated. I am for measures, gentlemen, and not men, and for this simple reason, that for four years we have had men and not measures, and I am wearied of them. But we are told that we ought not to accept any measures from the hands of those who oppose the Reform Bill. This is a proposition which it becomes us to examine with an unimpassioned spirit, and a severe scrutiny, for it is a very important one. The country is now divided into two parties, headed by different sections of the aristocracy: those who introduced, and those who opposed the Reform Bill. Admit the proposition of men and not measures, and the party that introduced that Bill are our masters for

life. Are you prepared for this? Is your confidence in the Whigs so implicit, so illimitable, that you will agree to the perpetual banishment of their political rivals from power? Are you prepared to leave the Whigs without opposition, without emulation, without check? I think it very dangerous; I think it very unconstitutional.

But let us examine this famous proposition a little more severely. All of you have heard of the Duke of Wellington's declaration against reform — God knows it is very famous. One would almost fancy that the people of England had listened to a declaration against reform from a Prime Minister for the first time in their lives. And yet but a few years before, a very few brief years, and they had listened to another declaration against reform, not less decided, not less vehement, not less vindictive — ay! and uttered, too, in the House of Commons, and not in the House of Lords — uttered, too, by a Prime Minister, the head of a Government of which all the individuals composing the recent Cabinet were either members or supporters. I allude to the declaration of Mr. Canning — a declaration that compromised* Lord Lansdowne and Lord Melbourne, and indeed every member of their party, who are now so loud in their anathemas against apostacy, and their personal horror of renegadoes. One solitary Whig alone stood aloof from Mr. Canning, and that was Lord Grey. Will the late Cabinet screen themselves under the shadow of his mantle? Lord Grey did not leave it behind; he did

* In the preface to his History of the Whig Party, published in 1852, Mr. Roebuck has some similiar remarks on the conduct of the 'Canningites' in relation to Parliamentary reform.

not leave them with his blessing, or the odour of his sanctity. Gentlemen, what strange changes have we not lived to witness! You all remember when my gallant opponent, for whom I entertain sincere respect, first appeared among us. You remember it was the most sudden thing in the world. We did not know where he came from; we thought he had dropped from the skies. You remember that Mr. Ellice, the Right Honourable Mr. Ellice, called upon us to elect the Colonel, although a stranger, out of *gratitude* to Lord Grey. Gratitude to Lord Grey! I suppose when he makes his appearance among us again, we shall be summoned to elect him out of *ingratitude* to Lord Grey, for that seems more the fashion now. Yes, gentlemen! Lord Grey refusing the Privy Seal,* and Lord Brougham soliciting the Chief Barony,† are two epigrammatic episodes in the history of reform that never can be forgotten.

But, gentlemen, fancy Mr. Spring Rice cheering Mr. Canning in his anti-reform tirade, and Mr. Ellice, the Right Honourable Mr. Ellice, who was so good as to send us down a member, crying 'Hear, hear,' and Sir John Hobhouse, who, from his conservatory

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* In the first Melbourne Administration, July, 1834. An amusing account of both of these incidents is to be found in the *Greville Memoirs*, vol. iii., pp. 113 and 157. Lord Brougham himself made the offer to Lord Grey, 'who rather smiled at the proposition, but did not express the pious resentment of his children. The Grey women would murder the Chancellor if they could.'

† In the following November, Lord Brougham, who was out of office, applied to his successor, Lord Lyndhurst, for the office of Chief Baron. Greville thought the appointment might be convenient for the Government. 'He (Brougham) could cut fewer capers in ermine than he could in plaid trousers'—the Chancellor's favourite wear.

of consistency, throws stones at the Duke of Wellington — Sir John Hobhouse, the supporter of Mr. Canning, who sailed into public life on the popular wings of annual parliaments and universal suffrage, and afterwards

Got pelted for his pains —

— oh! rare Sir John Hobhouse! Are we to be told that men like these, who backed and supported Mr. Canning under such circumstances, because they afterwards introduced and supported the Reform Bill, possess an exclusive right of calling every man an apostate who sees, in the altered condition of affairs, a ground for applying to a totally different set of circumstances a class of measures essentially new?

What an exquisite pretence to consistency there is in saying, 'So pure is the love we bear it, that we will sacrifice for its sake every chance of freedom — that we will endure the worst tyranny, rather than accept the greatest blessings that Reform may shower down upon us from the hands of renegades.' Did any one chalk 'apostate' on the back of Lord Palmerston, or outrage the nerves of those delicate tergiversators, the Messrs. Grant, by squibbing them in the street for their change of opinion? On the contrary, a remarkable abstinence from such crimination prevailed, as I think, gentlemen, it prevails at the present moment.

The people were content to accept the Reform Bill as a great remedial measure which they had often demanded, and which had been always denied, and they did not choose to scan too severely the previous conduct of those who conceded it to them.

They did not go about saying, 'We must have reform, but we will not have it from Lord Palmerston, because he is the child of corruption, born of Downing Street, and engendered in the Treasury, a second-rate official for twenty years under a succession of Tory Governments, but a Secretary of State under the Whigs.' Not they indeed! The people returned Lord Palmerston in triumph for Hampshire, and pennies were subscribed to present him with testimonials of popular applause. The people then took reform as some other people take stolen goods, 'and no questions asked.' The Cabinet of Lord Grey was not ungenerously twitted with the abandonment of principles which the country had given up, and to which no man could adhere who entertained the slightest hope of rendering himself an effective public servant.

The truth is, gentlemen, a statesman is the creature of his age, the child of circumstances, the creation of his times. A statesman is essentially a practical character; and when he is called upon to take office, he is not to inquire what his opinions might or might not have been upon this or that subject; he is only to ascertain the needful and the beneficial, and the most feasible measures are to be carried on. The fact is, the conduct and the opinions of public men at different periods of their career must not be too curiously contrasted in a free and aspiring country. The people have their passions, and it is even the duty of public men occasionally to adopt sentiments with which they do not sympathise,* because the people must have leaders. Then the opin-

* This was notoriously the case with Sir Robert Peel and Roman Catholic emancipation.

ions and prejudices of the Crown must necessarily influence a rising statesman. I say nothing of the weight which great establishments and corporations, and the necessity of their support and patronage, must also possess with an ambitious politician. All this, however, produces ultimate benefit; all these influences tend to form that eminently practical character for which our countrymen are celebrated. I laugh,* therefore, at the objection against a man, that at a former period of his career he advocated a policy different to his present one. All I seek to ascertain is whether his present policy be just, necessary, expedient; whether at the present moment he is prepared to serve the country according to its present necessities.

Such are the claims to public confidence which may be put forth in behalf of the Whigs; but if instead of being so miserably slender they were indeed substantial and important, I would say that no claims can entitle them to become the masters for life of the British people; and for my own part I have no doubt, and I have ever thought, that they intended to become our masters for life; and decidedly they would have gained their object had they succeeded in swamping the House of Peers as well as packing the House of Commons.† One of the most distinguished writers of the day,‡ and a member of the extreme Liberal party in the House of Commons, has recorded in a

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* Mr. Roebuck, in the work just referred to, marks the difference between such changes of opinion as Mr. Disraeli here describes and Sir Robert Peel's change upon the Corn Laws.

† See Preface.

‡ Mr. Bulwer (the late Lord Lytton) in *England and the English*, book v., chapter 4.

work which many of you have read, his regret that he ever was a supporter of the Whigs in their threatened attempt to overpower the House of Lords, and his self-congratulation that the attempt failed. Had it, however, succeeded, gentlemen, it well fits us to consider what would have then become of the liberties of England. I do assure you that in drawing your attention to this important topic I am not influenced by any party, any electioneering views.

The remarks which I shall venture to make upon it have pressed upon my mind in the calmness and solitude of study. I will allow for the freedom of the press; I will allow for the spirit of the age; I will allow for the march of intellect; but I cannot force from my mind the conviction that a House of Commons, concentrating in itself the whole power of the State, might—I should rather say would—notwithstanding the great antagonist forces to which I have alluded, establish in this country a despotism of the most formidable and dangerous character. Gentlemen, I repeat, I cannot resist the conviction, because I cannot shut my eyes to the historical truth. Let us look to the reign of Charles I., a period as eventful as, ay, infinitely more so than, any that has since occurred in this country. Believe me, gentlemen, we err when we take it for granted that this present age in England is peculiarly distinguished from preceding ones by the general diffusion of public knowledge and public spirit.

Two great revolutions immediately preceded the events of the reign to which I have alluded, revolutions productive of as much excitement and as much effect on the public mind of Europe as the great French Revolution, the Protestant Reformation, and

the establishment of a republic in the Netherlands. There was about this time, too, doubtless in some degree impelled by these great and strange events, a spring-tide in the intellect of England. What marvellous men then met within the walls of Parliament! The indefatigable Pym, the inscrutable Hampden, the passionate Eliot, the austere genius of Strafford! Worthy companions of these were St. John, Hollis, Vane; nor should we forget a Digby and a Capel, the chivalric Falkland and the sagacious Clarendon. Why, gentlemen, these were names that imparted to the deliberations of your Parliament an intellectual lustre not surpassed, perhaps not equalled, even in the brightest days of Pitt, and Fox, and Burke, and Sheridan. There was the same feeling abroad in favour of freedom, and the same enthusiasm for the rights of the subject. There was also, although it is not generally supposed, the same omnipotent influence operating in favour of this cause which we now hug ourselves in believing to be the invincible bulwark of our liberties. Yes, gentlemen, I am inclined to believe that the English press exercised at that moment a power not inferior to the authority it wields at the present day. Every street had its journal, every alley its ballad; besides these great methods of communication, public opinion, that vaunted public opinion, which we would fain believe to be the offspring of the present hour, appealed to the people in favour of the people by an oracle that for political purposes is now happily silent: I mean the pulpit.

Yet, gentlemen, notwithstanding all these checks and all these guaranties—checks and guaranties for your rights and liberties, I maintain, as powerful as

any that exist at the present day—what was the result? Your House of Commons, in which you are now called upon to place implicit confidence; your boasted House of Commons, which I for one will no more trust than any other human institution; your omnipotent House of Commons, after having pulled down the throne and decapitated the monarch, after having expelled the bishops from the House of Peers and then abrogated the peerage, set you at defiance. They concentrated in themselves all the powers of the State, and then voted their sittings perpetual; they began by quarrelling with the King about one hundred thousand pounds, and ended, in the short space of five years, in imposing upon the people burdens to the amount of forty millions sterling; confiscated the estates of a large portion of their fellow-subjects, divided themselves into separate committees, and monopolised in their own persons all the functions of the State, and finally, on one morning, divided among themselves *300,000l.* of the public money. Did I say *finally?* Can we forget that this same House of Commons, when their rapacity had dried up all other sources of spoliation, invented the tax most odious to Englishmen—the excise? and which they laid, too, not merely upon the luxuries, but the very necessaries of existence.

Looking, then, gentlemen, at such consequences of an implicit confidence in the House of Commons, I confess myself reluctant to quit the vantage-ground on which the constitution of the country is now felicitously placed. Looking at such consequences, I think we may feel that we have some interest in maintaining the prerogative of the crown and the privileges of the Peers. I, for one, shall ever view

with jealous eye the proceedings of any House of Commons, however freely chosen. Nor have I marked in the conduct of the reformed House of Commons anything, I confess, to lull me into over-confidence or security. I think I perceive, even thus early in their career, some symptoms of jobbing which would not have disgraced the Long Parliament itself; and some instances of servility which perhaps we must go to the reign of Charles the Second to rival.

So much for the Reformed Parliament, gentlemen; and now for the Reform Ministry!

One would think, from the cry that is now raised by the partisans of these persons, that they were a band of patriots, who had never been animated by any other sentiment than the welfare of their country, and had never by any chance quarrelled among themselves. The Reform Ministry! Where is it? Let us calmly trace the history of this 'united' Cabinet.

Very soon after its formation Lord Durham withdrew from the royal councils — the only man, it would appear, of any decision of character among its members. Still, it was a most 'united' Cabinet. Lord Durham only withdrew on account of his ill-health. The friends of this nobleman represent him as now ready to seize the helm of the State; a few months back, it would appear his frame was too feeble to bear even the weight of the Privy Seal. Lord Durham retired on account of ill-health; he generously conceded this plea in charity to the colleagues he despised. Lord Durham quitted the 'united' Cabinet, and very shortly afterwards its two most able members in the House of Commons, and two of their most influential colleagues in the House of Lords, suddenly se-

cede. What a rent! But then it was about a trifle. In all other respects the Cabinet was most 'united.' Five leading members of the Reform Ministry have departed; let the venerable reputation of Lord Grey and the fair name of Lord Althorp still keep together, and still command the respect, if not the confidence of the nation. But, marvel of marvels! Lord Grey and Lord Althorp both retire in a morning, and in—disgust! Lord Grey is suddenly discovered to be behind his time, and his secession is even intimated to be a subject of national congratulation: Lord Althorp joins the crew again, and the Cabinet is again 'united.' Delightful union!

Then commenced a series of scenes unparalleled in the history of the administrations of any country; scenes which would have disgraced individuals in private life, and violated the decorum of domestic order. The Lord Chancellor, dangling about the Great Seal in post-chaises, spouting in pot-houses, and vowing that he would write to the Sovereign by the post; while Cabinet Ministers exchanged menacing looks at public dinners, and querulously contradicted each other before the eyes of an admiring nation.* Good God! gentlemen, could this go on? Why, even Mr. Ellice

* This is an allusion to Lord Brougham's celebrated tour in Scotland in the autumn of 1834, when he carried the Great Seal with him. On one occasion it was stolen from him by some ladies, who threw him into a pitiable state of consternation. He told the people of Inverness that he would write to the King that night, to tell his Majesty of their loyalty. Lord Durham and Lord Brougham met at the Edinburgh banquet given to Lord Grey at that time, when they spoke some sharp words of each other; and although Lord Durham had then left office, they are probably the two 'Cabinet Ministers' here intended. Cf. Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. viii., p. 453.

—the Right Honourable Mr. Ellice—who was so good as to send us down a member of Parliament, he could no longer submit to nestle in this falling house, and he, too, quitted the 'united' Cabinet, because he had —what, for a ducat?—a sore throat!

Why, they ridicule themselves! and yet the tale is not all told. There is really too much humour in the entertainment; they make us laugh too much—the fun is overdone. It is like going to those minor theatres where we see Liston in four successive farces. Lord Melbourne, whose claim to being Prime Minister of England, according to the Whigs, is that he is 'a gentleman'—Lord Melbourne flies to the King, and informs him that a plan of 'Church reform' has been proposed in the united Cabinet, and that Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Spring Rice, the only remaining ministers in the slightest degree entitled, I will not say to the confidence, but the consideration of the country, have in consequence menaced him with their resignations.

I doubt not, gentlemen, that this plan of 'Church reform' was only some violent measure to revive the agitation of the country, and resuscitate the popularity of the Whigs—a measure which they had never meant, and never desired, to pass. Perhaps, feeling that it was all over with them, it was a wretched *ruse,* apparently that they might go out upon a *popular* measure. However, Lord Melbourne, with as serious a face as he could command, informed His Majesty that the remains of the 'united' Cabinet, Sir John Hobhouse and Lord John Russell, were still as united as ever, and he ended by proposing that the House of Commons should be led by his Lordship, who, on the same principle that bad wine produces

good vinegar, has somehow turned from a tenth-rate author into a first-rate politician; and then Lord Melbourne says that the King turned them out. Turned them out, gentlemen! why, His Majesty laughed at them!

The truth is, that this famous Reform Ministry, this great 'united' Cabinet, degenerated into a grotesque and Hudibrastic faction, the very lees of ministerial existence, the offal of official life. They were a ragged regiment, compared with which Falstaff's crew was a band of regulars. The King would not march through Coventry with them—that was flat. *The* Reform Ministry indeed! Why, scarcely an original member of that celebrated Cabinet remained. You remember, gentlemen, the story of Sir John Cutler's silk hose. Those famous stockings remind me of this famous Ministry: for really, between Hobhouse darns and Ellice botching, I hardly can decide whether those hose are silk or worsted. *The* Reform Ministry!

I dare say, now, some of you have heard of Mr. Ducrow, that celebrated gentleman, who rides upon six horses. What a prodigious achievement! It seems impossible; but you have confidence in Ducrow. You fly to witness it; unfortunately one of the horses is ill, and a donkey is substituted in its place. But Ducrow is still admirable; there he is, bounding along in a spangled jacket and cork slippers! The whole town is mad to see Ducrow riding at the same time on six horses. But now two more of the steeds are seized with the staggers, and lo! three jackasses in their stead! Still Ducrow persists, and still announces to the public that he will ride round his circus every night on his six steeds. At last all the horses are

knocked up, and now there are half-a-dozen donkeys. What a change! Behold the hero in the amphitheatre, the spangled jacket thrown on one side, the cork slippers on the other. Puffing, panting, and perspiring, he pokes one sullen brute, thwacks another, cuffs a third, and curses a fourth, while one brays to the audience, and another rolls in the sawdust. Behold the Prime Minister and the Reform Ministry — the spirited and snow-white steeds have gradually changed into an equal number of sullen and obstinate donkeys; while Mr. Merryman, who, like the Lord Chancellor, was once the very life of the ring, now lies his despairing length in the middle of the stage, with his jokes exhausted and his bottle empty!

Enough, gentlemen, of the Reform ministry, and the Reformed Parliament. Let us hope that the time has arrived when we may be favoured with a national administration and a patriotic House of Commons. Let us hope that by their salutary influence the peace of Europe and the honour of England may be alike maintained, the great interests of the country fostered and protected, and those considerable changes firmly but cautiously prosecuted in our social system which the spirit of the age demands and the necessities of the times require.

SPEECH AT TAUNTON, April 29, 1835.

[On the formation of Lord Melbourne's second Government in 1835, Mr. Labouchere, the member for Taunton, having accepted office, was opposed by Mr. Disraeli, who, in one of the best of his early speeches, explained what he had meant by his previous advocacy of the ballot and triennial Parliaments, and why it was no longer necessary to insist on either of them. The balance of parties deranged by the elections of 1832 had been restored, and the Whigs were no longer dangerous. This was the famous 'O'Connell speech' which led to the savage denunciation of Mr. Disraeli by the incensed agitator. That Mr. Disraeli, having once accepted his assistance, would have done better to abstain from reproaching him may be granted without convicting Mr. Disraeli of the slightest political inconsistency. He had always been against Repeal. He spoke of the dismemberment of the Empire in 1835 as he spoke of it in 1880. But the opportunity was too good a one to be lost, and for many years afterwards the circumstances were thrown in his teeth whenever he appeared in public. The speech gave rise to a long correspondence between Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Bulwer, Mr. Hume, Mr. O'Connell, and Mr. Morgan O'Connell, which appeared in the *Times* and in the *Globe* and lasted through the summer and autumn of 1835 into January, 1836. As Mr. Disraeli pointed out, had O'Connell applied to himself in the first instance for an explanation of his language, he would have known at once that the words complained of were not applied to him by the speaker, but were but a quotation of the terms which the Whigs had applied to him themselves. The report of the speech here given, which is taken from the *Dorset County Chronicle*, differs a little from the one given by the *Morning Chronicle*, which is probably what O'Connell saw. The word 'incendiary' is not found in the local report. But the sense is the same.]

MR. BAILIFF and gentlemen electors of Taunton, I will not claim your gratitude for having given you the Reform Bill, but let me claim your gratitude for having given you the first poll under the Reform Bill. Some observations have been made, gentlemen, deprecating any display of hostile feeling to either of the candidates. I have seen none. I can only say that a more courteous opponent or a more courteous constituency I never encountered and never appealed to; and I trust that as I feel that I have made many friends in Taunton, when I leave it I shall do so without a single enemy. I have at other times been placed before the people, and gentlemen, if I were now to be beaten, as my opponents loudly express themselves, it would be almost preferable to be beaten at Taunton than to win at any other place. I say this because from one unfortunate expression of mine, evidently spoken in playfulness, you may have believed that, instead of being a very good-natured, I was really a very pugnacious person. But when I was assailed under the circumstances of appearing as a stranger the first time before you, I could not refrain from observing that I was the last person to be put down by clamour. Perhaps I may take this opportunity of explaining to that honourable gentleman who seconded my opponent, and who laid so much stress on my observation that 'the Whigs had seized the bloody hand of O'Connell.'* Is it possible that

* No report is to be found of the speech in which this sentence occurs. It may have been used in a speech made by Mr. Disraeli to

so elaborate a rhetorician as that honourable gentleman can have literally supposed that Mr. O'Connell was in the habit of going down to the House of Commons with his hand reeking with gore, or that the Whig Government crawled upon their knees to embrace it? I meant they had formed an alliance with one whose policy was hostile to the preservation of the country, who threatens us with a dismemberment of the Empire which cannot take place without a civil war.

My honourable opponent says that the Whigs would not go a hair's breadth to gain the assistance of Mr. O'Connell. Permit me to remind you that the Whigs have already gone much further. My honourable opponent says 'No.' What! have they not adopted the principle which twelve months ago they opposed, to secure his support? If they have done this to gain his support and put them in power, what will they do to gain his support to keep them in power? It is much more difficult to retain power than to obtain it; if they mean to keep that power on the hair-breadth principle, they will soon have to return to their constituents.

I cannot understand the principle by which the Whigs would reform, as they style it, the Church of Ireland. It appears to me that they have offered a premium to the *White Boys* to destroy the Protestants. If forty-nine souls are not worthy to be saved whilst fifty are, I think we shall soon have no congregations in Ireland which exceed the Popish tariff of salvation. My honourable opponent has told

some of his supporters in a room at the Castle Inn on the night of his arrival in Taunton, April 21, which is mentioned but not reported by the *Taunton Courier*, April 22.

you that the subject of the Irish Church is one that places the existence of the kingdom in hazard. I confess it; but who has brought it to such a crisis? Gentlemen, it was the ambition of that weak aristocratic party in the State, who could only obtain power by leaguing themselves with one whom they had denounced as a traitor. If the Irish Church has always been the intolerable nuisance it is described, why has this nuisance been so lately discovered? It is upon record that twenty years ago tithes were paid more readily in Ireland than rents are now in England.

Gentlemen, it is agitation that has made the nuisance, and it is the Whig party who, for their own ends, have encouraged the agitator. Gentlemen, I am just reminded that I have written a novel. (Cries of 'A good one!') I am glad there is a critic in the crowd who joins with me in opinion. I trust there is no disgrace, gentlemen, in being an author. I trust there is no disgrace in having written that which has been read by thousands of my fellow-countrymen, and which has been translated into every language in civilised Europe; and I trust that one who is an author by the gift of nature is as good as one who is Master of the Mint by the gift of Lord Melbourne.

This I do know, gentlemen, that twelve months hence I shall still be the author of *Vivian Grey*, though I shall be very much surprised if at the same period my honourable opponent be still Master of the Mint. Gentlemen, this attack about the novel reminds me of the only charge of which I am accused. Really, I think my opponents, if they wished to attack me, should at any rate have taken care that their attacks were original. I think it is some reflection on the

intelligence of Taunton that they should copy an anonymous article from a London newspaper. Though I have despatched the novel, I cannot help remembering that the editor of the *Sun* declares that I am the puppet of the Duke of Buckingham, and a fellow-labourer in the same vineyard. The editor of the *Morning Chronicle* announces that I am a Marylebone Radical. Gentlemen, if there be anything on which I pique myself it is my consistency. Well, I shall be ready to prove that consistency either in the House of Commons or on the hustings of Taunton. Every man may be attacked once; but no one ever attacked me twice. Gentlemen, here is my consistency. I have always opposed with my utmost energy the party of which my honourable opponent is a distinguished member. That party I have opposed for reasons I am prepared to give and to uphold.

As the question 'What is he?' has been repeated by Mr. Bunter, I should wish to reply to it, that hereafter there may be no mistake. When I first entered into political life, I found the high places of the realm filled by the party of which my opponent is a member. I found they had an immense majority in the House of Commons, gained by a system of nomination not less equivocal than that of the late borough-mongers. Believing that the policy of the party was such as must destroy the honour of the kingdom abroad, and the happiness of the people at home——. That was my opinion, though I perceive it is not the opinion of some here. I believed that if the Whigs remained in office for any length of time, this glorious, this unrivalled Empire would perish for ever—I considered it my duty to oppose the Whigs,

and to ensure their discomfiture and, if possible, their destruction as a party.

Let me recall to your recollection the extraordinary characteristics of the political world when I entered it. Gentlemen, the great safeguard of our liberties, the balance of power, was destroyed. There was then no constitutional opposition to keep the Government in check. That great Tory party, which is now so strongly constituted, was a shattered, a feeble, a disheartened fragment, self-confessing their own inability to carry on the King's government, and announcing an impending revolution. Gentlemen, had I been a political adventurer, I had nothing to do but to join the Whigs; but conscientiously believing that their policy was in every way pernicious, I felt it my duty to oppose them.

But how were they to be opposed? Where were the elements of a party to keep the Government in check, and to bring back the old constitutional balance? I thought they existed in the liberal Tories, and in those independent reformers who had been returned to Parliament independently of the Whigs. I laboured for their union, and I am proud of it. Gentlemen, remember the Whig policy; they had a packed policy. They had altered the duration of Parliaments once before. They had the whole power of the State in their hands. I believed, and I still believe, that we were nearer to a Long Parliament than we imagined. I wished to break their strength by frequent elections and frequent appeals to a misgoverned people; therefore I advocated a recurrence to those triennial Parliaments which it was once the proudest boast of the Tories to advocate. I wished to give the country gentlemen a chance of represent-

ing the neighbouring towns where they are esteemed, instead of the nominees of a sectarian oligarchy. Therefore I proposed the adoption of the ballot in the only constituencies willing to assume it.

And now where is my inconsistency? Have I not given an answer to my assailants? I am convinced that the result of these measures would have been that which I anticipated. Strong measures, certainly; but when are strong measures to be adopted if not when our country is in danger? Had the Whigs remained in power — and it seemed to me, and the wisest men in the kingdom shared my conviction, that they were our masters for life* — had, I repeat, they remained in power, I considered the dismemberment† of the Empire inevitable, and therefore I tried to root them out. But, gentlemen, great, nay almost illimitable as was my confidence in Whig incapacity, I confess they far surpassed even my most sanguine expectations; the mighty Whig party, which had consented to a revolution to gain power, fell to pieces, the vessel of the State righted itself, and now there is no necessity to cut away its masts.

Gentlemen, the object for which I laboured is attained; the balance of parties is restored: and now, gentlemen, I do not longer advocate the measures in question, simply because they are no longer necessary. Is this an answer? Is this inconsistency? When I hear my honourable opponent say he comes before you as the advocate of the same principles which brought him here five years back, I would ask

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* Mr. Disraeli repeats this assertion in *Coningsby*. Cf. Introduction.

† Cf. Wellington Despatches of this period, *passim*.

him in sincerity, what these principles are. Are they the principles of the renowned Government which gave you the Reform Bill? If so, why has the head of that very Cabinet left the Government of which my opponent is a member? Lord Grey has left them with disgust. Are the principles of the honourable gentleman the principles of Lord Stanley? And he has left; and others also. Gentlemen, he says, during that period, the slaves have been emancipated. That great measure was carried by that illustrious statesman, Lord Stanley, who will have nothing to do with them. The Whigs profess economy; they imitated the Duke of Wellington. They say that a reduction of taxation has taken place: thanks to the political unions that forced themselves into the antechamber of the Minister. Did the Tories ever repeal a tax one night and rescind the resolution of relief the next? Gentlemen, that act alone sealed the fate of the Whig Parliament. Could the slaves of a Turkish Pasha be more servile?

I am asked why Sir Robert Peel dissolved Parliament. I answer, because he knew well the Parliament was insincere in Reform. The House of Commons consisted of the tools of the Whig party. The best answer to the Whigs, why the Parliament was dissolved, is that 105 additional Conservatives have been returned. Gentlemen, there will be a better answer when it is dissolved the next time—that dissolution will be very speedy. I fear I shall not have the honour of representing you long before that takes place. I am asked how can Sir Robert Peel be a Reformer? There has not been a greater number of votes recorded against Reform by any man than have been recorded against it by Lord Melbourne. Lord

Melbourne put the amendment to the question of the Manchester Massacre, of which so much has been said. He was one of the hottest Tories that ever existed, and now he is prime leader of the Whigs.

Gentlemen, I believe there is some gentleman here who wishes to hear something about the bishops. That great practical measure of Church Reform which the Tories had the honour of producing to the public, satisfactory and extensive in its details, is a measure of reform brought in by the Tories, a measure which goes to the equalisation of the bishops in the first place; in the second place, puts an end to pluralities for ever; in the third place, terminates the evil of non-residence; and in the fourth place, ensures the general commutation of tithes. These are four great questions which have so long agitated the country. The same Tory Government in four months did ample justice to the rights and wishes of that important part of our population, the Dissenters. Gentlemen, I have ever been and am a supporter of the Church of England, because I believe it to be the great bulwark of civil and religious liberty; because I consider the leaders of the Church have been the leaders of the people in a great crisis of our country; and these very bishops have saved the constitution of the realm.

THE VALUE OF LITERATURE TO MEN OF BUSINESS.

Address Delivered to the Members of the Manchester Athenæum, October 23, 1844.

[This visit to Manchester was during Mr. Disraeli's tour through the manufacturing districts, in company with Lord John Manners and Mr. B. Cochrane—the results of which he reproduced in *Sybil*.]

ADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—When I last had the honour of addressing the members of the Manchester Athenæum, they were struggling for the existence of their institution. It was a critical moment in their fortunes. They had incurred a considerable debt in its establishment: the number of its members had gradually, and even for some years, considerably decreased; and in appealing to the sympathies of the community they were, unfortunately, appealing to those who were themselves but slowly recovering from a period of severe and lengthened suffering. A year has elapsed, and the efforts that you thus made to extricate yourselves from these difficulties may now be fairly examined. That considerable debt has been

liquidated: the number of your members has been trebled—I believe quadrupled; and I am happy to say that your fortunes have rallied, while that suffering and surrounding community once more meet together in prosperity and success.

I think it not inopportune, at this moment of security and serene fortune, that we should clearly understand the object for which this great struggle has been made. Under circumstances which, if not desperate, filled you with the darkest gloom, you resolved like men to exert your utmost energies: you applied yourselves to those difficulties with manly energy—with manly discretion. Not too confident in yourselves, you appealed, and appealed successfully, to the softer sex, who you thought would sympathise with an institution intended to humanise and refine. *Dux fœmina facti* might, indeed, be the motto of your institution, for it was mainly by such influence that you obtained the result which we now celebrate.

But if the object which you had at stake was of so great importance, if it justified exertions so remarkable, made too at a moment when energy was doubly valuable, because you were dispirited, it, I think, would not be unwise for us now to inquire what was the object for which we then exerted ourselves, whether it were one which justified that great sacrifice, and if it were, to ascertain why it was ever imperilled. To-night we are honoured by many who, like myself, are strangers except in feeling, to your community. We are honoured, too, by the presence of deputies from many societies in this county and the North of England, who acknowledge a sympathy and an analogy of purpose with the Athenæum of Manchester. It will be well then to place before them

briefly for their instruction, and perhaps it may not be without profit to remind you what that institution was that you have struggled to uphold, but the existence of which was once endangered.

I think it is seven or eight years ago that some of the leading members of your community, remembering perhaps that there was a time when they regretted that for them such advantages did not exist, thought they would establish in this great city some institution that might offer to the youth of Manchester relaxation which might elevate, and a distraction which would save them from a senseless dissipation. They thought that the time had arrived when a duty devolved on those who took a leading part in communities, that they should sympathise with the wants of the rising race, and therefore they resolved to establish an institution where those advantages that I have referred to might be supplied.

With these views they resolved, in the first instance, that some place should be supplied where the youth of Manchester might become perfectly acquainted with the passing mind, and passions, and feelings, and intelligence of the age. They rightly understood that the newspaper was the most effective arm of the press. It may, indeed, be considered as the infantry of the press. It is not a complete battalion — you require also ordnance and artillery, a brilliant cavalry: above all, you require the staff of the commander-in-chief, that without absolutely or actively interfering in the fray surveys all that occurs, and is ready at all times to apply itself to the quarter which requires counsel; but still you may consider the journal as the most efficient arm of the press. With these views they furnished a chamber in which the members of the

Athenæum might perfectly be acquainted, in the perusal of the chief journals of the empire, with all that was passing in the country, all that was agitating and interesting the public mind—which might supply them with that information, and guide them in forming those opinions which it is the duty of every citizen of a free community to be acquainted with and to entertain.

But, conscious that, however qualified the journal is to stimulate curiosity, to assist investigation, to guide opinion, the knowledge of that individual who is limited only by the daily press is in danger of becoming superficial, you thought that the members of the institution should have some means of consulting the more mature opinions, the more accurate researches, of the literary mind of this and other countries, and wisely you made the chamber in which they might read the newspaper an anteroom only to the library. You formed a collection which is now not contemptible in numbers, for you may count it by thousands. What, however, is not so great as many of you must desire—which, in passing, I may be permitted to say, is no disgrace to it, because it is a deficiency which is shared by every great collection in this country, and I believe in Europe, but which I should be glad and you would be proud to be supplied in Manchester—I mean, is that department which may be described as a commercial library.

Manchester, that was once merely an assemblage of manufactures, is now a great mercantile emporium, and at slight expense and with no great difficulty, if there were sufficient zeal, you might make a collection of all those interesting and isolated tracts on commerce which at various times during the last century

have appeared in England, which now with difficulty you can refer to, but which would form in a collection a peculiar and interesting body of commercial literature, and which, by-the-bye, you cannot find in the national repository of this country.

You who had thus furnished the members of this institution with the journals which gave them the information and feeling of the hour, the library where they might correct the hasty opinions which perhaps that passing criticism is apt to engender—you knew there were many not deficient in ability, not deficient in aptness or feeling, to whom the very ceremony of reading is irksome, and who require to be appealed to by another means, perhaps at first sight more captivating. Therefore you formed a theatre where lectures were given, where the experiments of philosophy, the investigations of literature and the profusions of art, were rendered agreeable to the audience by the charms of the human voice. You were not content with having raised an institution where the journal, the library and the lecture-room were always prepared to enlighten or to amuse—you remembered those wise words of Charles V., who said that 'The man who knew two languages had two souls and two lives,' and therefore you established classes by which the youth of this city might initiate themselves in a knowledge of the modern languages. Your plan was comprehensive: but it was not limited even by this fourth division. You knew well that in a free country, in a country that prides itself upon the science and practice of self-government, it is the duty—at least it is the interest—of all men to be able to express themselves with perspicuity, and if possible with elegance: therefore you established a discussion

society, an institution in harmony with the political life and the social manners of England.

Having thus amply provided for the formation of the mind of your new and rising community, you still remembered (borrowing a happy idea from those races of antiquity to whom you owe your name) that any education which confined itself to sedentary pursuits was essentially imperfect, that the body as well as the mind should be cultivated — you wisely, and in no common and ordinary spirit, established a gymnasium; these are the principal characteristics of your institution. There are others on which it would be wearisome to dwell: but I have placed before you six principal objects that you had desired to attain. Having taken this large and comprehensive view of the wants of your society, and meeting them with a spirit so liberal and large, you took the best and wisest step. You knew well the effect that architecture produces on the human mind; you determined therefore that your establishment should be embodied in an edifice that should please the imagination and satisfy the taste. You invited the most eminent of modern architects; under the roof of a noble elevation you supplied the means for pursuing those studies that I have indicated: and this is a simple account of the Manchester Athenæum.

It is difficult to conceive how a nobler purpose, if for a moment we dilate upon it, could have animated your intentions. When we remember the class of your community for which this institution was particularly adapted — when we conceive — difficult as it is, surrounded as we now are with luxury and pleasure — when we attempt to picture to our imagination what is the position of a youth, perhaps of very tender

years, sent, as I am informed is very frequently the case, from a distant district—to form his fortune in this great metropolis of labour and of science—when we think of that youth, tender in age, with no domestic hearth to soothe and stimulate, to counsel or control—when we picture him to ourselves after a day of indefatigable toil, left to his lonely evenings and his meagre lodgings, without a friend and without a counsellor—flying to dissipation from sheer want of distraction, and perhaps involved in vice before he is conscious of the fatal net that is surrounding him—what a contrast to his position does it offer when we picture him to ourselves with a feeling of self-confidence, which supports and sustains him after his day of toil, entering a great establishment where everything that can satisfy curiosity, that can form taste, that can elevate the soul of man and lead to noble thoughts and honourable intentions, surrounds him!

When we think of the convenience and the comfort, the kindness and the sympathy, which, with a due decorum of manners he is sure to command—this youth, who but a few hours before was a stranger—viewing an institution like the present only in this limited aspect, one must regard it as a great harbour of intellectual refuge and social propriety.

If my description of what this institution offers to us, if my view of what it in some degree supplies, be just, what, I must inquire, is the reason that an institution, the prosperity of which now cannot be doubted, but so brief a time ago could apparently have been in the last stage of its fortunes? It is not an agreeable task—I fear it may be considered by some an invidious one—if I, who am a stranger

among you, should attempt to play the critic upon your conduct: but I feel confidence in your indulgence. I remember the kindness which has placed me in this honourable position, and therefore I shall venture to express to you the two reasons to which I think the dangerous state of your position must fairly be ascribed.

I would say, in the first place, without imputing the slightest fault to the originators of this institution —wishing to be most distinctly understood as not only not imputing any fault to them, but most decidedly being of opinion that the fault does not lie at their door, still I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that in the origin of this institution, by circumstances not foreseen, and which certainly were not intended, a party, a limited, and a sectarian feeling, in some degree pervaded its management. I confess, myself, that it appears to me that it would have been a marvel if it had been otherwise. When we remember the great changes that had then but very recently occurred in this country; when we recall to our mind not only the great changes that had occurred, but the still greater that were menaced and discussed; when we remember what an influence is created where local jealousy blends with political passion, it is not difficult to imagine, because there are none of us present but in their sphere must have felt its influence —it is not wonderful that men of different political opinions should look with extreme jealousy upon each other.

A combination of peculiar circumstances that created a balanced state of parties in those places where the struggle for dominion and power takes place, very much assisted this feeling: and that such a feeling

existed throughout all England in a degree more intense and more virulent than has ever been equalled in the history of this country, I think no man will deny and all must deplore. For my own part, I really believe that, had that party and sectarian feeling proceeded in the same ratio of virulence it has done for the last twelve or fourteen years, it must have exercised a barbarising influence upon public sentiments and public manners.

There are some amongst us now, I know, who believe that the period has arrived when a great effort must be made to emancipate this country from the degrading thraldom of faction—to terminate, if possible, that extreme, that sectarian and limited view in which all human conduct is examined, observed, and criticised—to put an end to that exclusiveness, which, in its peculiar sphere, is equally deleterious as that aristocratical exclusiveness of manners which has produced so much evil; and, as far as I can form an opinion, these views have met with sympathy from every part of the country. I look upon it that to-night—I hope I am not mistaken—we are met to consummate and to celebrate the emancipation of this city, at least as far as the Athenæum extends, from the influence of these feelings. I hope that our minds and our hearts are alike open to the true character of this institution, to the necessities which have created it, to the benefits to which it leads: and happy I shall be, and all, I am sure, who are assisting me this evening, if it, prove that our efforts, however humble, may have assisted in so delightful and so desirable a consummation.

Now, that is one of the reasons, and one of the principal reasons, why I believe a blight seemed to

have fallen over our fortunes. I think at the same time that there is another cause that had exercised an injurious effect upon the position, until recently, of this institution. I think that a limited view of its real character has been taken even by those who were inclined to view it in a spirit of extreme friendliness. It has been looked upon in the light of a luxury and not of a necessity; as a means of enjoyment in the hour of prosperity from which we ought to be debarred when the adverse moment has arrived: so that, when trade was prospering, when all was sunshine, a man might condescend to occupy his spare hours in something else than a melancholy brooding over the state of the country—that when returns were rapid and profit ready, one might deign to cultivate one's faculties and become acquainted with what the mind of Europe was conceiving or executing; but these were delights to be reserved only for those chosen hours. Now, that, I am bound frankly to say, is not the view which I take of this question—not the idea which I have formed of the real character of the Manchester Athenæum; I look upon it as part of that great educational movement which is the noble and ennobling characteristic of the age in which we live.

Viewing it in that light, I cannot content myself that it should be supported by fits and starts. The impulse which has given us this movement in modern times is one that may be traced to an age that may now be considered comparatively remote, though the swell of the waters has but recently approached our own shores. Heretofore society was established necessarily on a very different principle to that which is now its basis. As civilisation has gradually pro-

gressed, it has equalised the physical qualities of man. Instead of the strong arm it is now the strong hand that is the moving principle of society. You have disenthroned Force and placed on her high seat Intelligence; and the necessary consequence of this great revolution is that it has become the duty and the delight equally of every man to cultivate his faculties. The prince of all philosophy has told you in an immortal apophthegm, so familiar to you all that it is now written in your halls and chambers, 'Knowledge is power.' If that memorable passage had been pursued by the student who first announced the discovery of that great man to society, he would have found an oracle not less striking, and in my mind certainly not less true, for Lord Bacon has not only said that 'Knowledge is power,' but, living one century after the discovery of the printing press, he has also announced to the world that 'Knowledge is pleasure.'

Why, when the great body of mankind had become familiar with this great discovery, when they learned that a new source was opened to them of influence and enjoyment, is it wonderful that from that hour the heart of nations has palpitated with the desire of becoming acquainted with all that has happened, and with speculating on what may occur? It has indeed produced upon the popular intellect an influence almost as great as—I might say analogous to—the great change which was produced upon the old commercial world by the discovery of the Americas. A new standard of value was introduced, and after this, to be distinguished man must be intellectual.

Nor indeed am I surprised that this feeling has so powerfully influenced our race; for the idea that hu-

man happiness is dependent on the cultivation of the mind and on the discovery of truth, is, next to the conviction of our immortality, the idea the most full of consolation to man; for the cultivation of the mind has no limits, and truth is the only thing that is eternal. Indeed, when you consider what a man is who knows only what is passing under his own eyes, and what the condition of the same man must be who belongs to an institution like the one which has assembled us together to-night, is it—ought it to be—a matter of surprise that from that moment to the present you have had a general feeling throughout the civilised world in favour of the diffusion of knowledge?

A man who knows nothing but the history of the passing hour, who knows nothing of the history of the past but that a certain person whose brain was as vacant as his own occupied the same house as himself, who in a moment of despondency or of gloom has no hope in the morrow, because he has read nothing that has taught him that the morrow has any changes—that man, compared with him who has read the most ordinary abridgment of history or the most common philosophical speculation, is as distinct and different an animal as if he had fallen from some other planet, was influenced by a different organisation, working for a different end, and hoping for a different result. It is knowledge that influences and equalises the social condition of man; that gives to all, however different their political position, passions which are in common, and enjoyments which are universal.

Knowledge is like the mystic ladder in the patriarch's dream. Its base rests on the primæval earth, its crest

is lost in the shadowy splendour of the empyrean; while the great authors who for traditionary ages have held the chain of science and philosophy, of poesy and erudition, are the angels ascending and descending the sacred scale, and maintaining, as it were, the communication between man and heaven. This feeling is so universal that there is no combination of society in any age in which it has not developed itself. It may indeed be partly restrained under despotic governments, under peculiar systems of retarded civilisation, but it is a consequence as incidental to the spirit and the genius of the Christian civilisation of Europe as that the day should follow night, and the stars should shine according to their laws and order.

Why, the very name of the institution that brings us together illustrates the fact. I can recall, and I think I see more than one gentleman around me who equally can recall, the hours in which we wandered amid—

'Fields that cool Ulyssus loves.'

At least there is my honourable friend, the member for Stockport* who, I am sure, has a lively recollection of that classic stream, for I remember one of the most effective allusions he made to it in one of the most admirable speeches I ever listened to. But, notwithstanding that allusion, I would still appeal to the poetry of his constitution, and I know it abounds in that quality; I am sure that he could not have looked without emotion on that immortal scene. I still can remember that olive-crowned plain, that sunset crag, that citadel fame of ineffable beauty! That

* Mr. Cobden.

was a brilliant civilisation developed by a gifted race more than 2,000 years ago: at a time when the ancestors of the manufacturers of Manchester, who now clothe the world, were themselves covered with skins and tattooes like the red men of the wilderness.

But influences more powerful even than the useful lapse of time separate and distinguish you from that race. They were the children of the sun: you live in a distant, rugged, and northern clime; they bowed before different altars, they followed different customs, they were modified by different manners. Votaries of the Beautiful, they sought in art the means of embodying their passionate conceptions: you have devoted your energies to utility; and by the means of a power almost unknown to antiquity, by its miraculous agencies you have applied its creative force to almost every combination of human circumstances that could produce your objects. Yet, amid the toil and triumphs of your scientific industry, upon you there comes the indefinable, the irresistible yearning for intellectual refinement; you build an edifice consecrated to those beautiful emotions and to those civilising studies in which they excelled, and you impress upon its front a name taken from—

> 'Where on Ægean shores a city rose,
> Built nobly; clear the air and light the soil;
> Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts
> And eloquence.'

Beautiful triumph of immortal genius! Sublime incentive to eternal fame! Then, when the feeling is so universal, when it is one which modern civilisation is maturing and developing, who does not feel that it is not only the most benevolent, but the most

politic thing you can do to avail yourself of its influence, and to direct in every way the formation of that character upon which intellect must necessarily now exercise an irresistible influence? We cannot shut our eyes any longer to the immense revolution; knowledge is no longer a lonely eremite affording a chance and captivating hospitality to some wandering pilgrim: knowledge is now found in the market-place, a citizen and leader of citizens. The spirit has touched the multitude: it has impregnated the mass—

Totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.

I would yet say one word to those for whom this institution is not entirely but principally formed. I would address myself to that youth on whom the hopes of all societies repose and depend. I doubt not that they feel conscious of the position which they occupy—a position which, under all circumstances, at all periods, in every clime and country, is one replete with duty. The Youth of a nation are the Masters of Posterity; but the youth I address have duties peculiar to the position which they occupy. They are the rising generation of a society unprecedented in the history of the world; that is at once powerful and new. In other parts of the kingdom the remains of an ancient civilisation are prepared ever to guide, to cultivate, to inform, to influence the rising mind. But they are born in a miraculous creation of novel powers, and it is rather a providential instinct that has developed the necessary means of maintaining the order of your new civilisation than the natural foresight of man.

This is their inheritance. They will be called upon to perform duties — great duties; I, for one, wish, for their sakes and for the sake of my country, that they may be performed greatly. I give to them that counsel that I have ever given to youth, and which I believe to be the wisest and the best — I tell them to aspire. I believe that the man who does not look up will look down, and that the spirit that does not dare to soar is destined perhaps to grovel. Every individual is entitled to aspire to that position which he believes his faculties qualify him to occupy; I know there are some who look with what I believe is short-sighted timidity and false prudence upon such views. They are apt to tell us, 'Beware of filling the youthful mind with an impetuous tumult of turbulent fancies; teach youth rather to be content with his position; do not induce him to fancy that he is that which he is not, or to aspire to that which he cannot achieve.' In my mind these are superficial delusions. He who enters the world finds his level. It is the solitary being, the isolated individual alone in his solitude, who may be apt to miscalculate his powers and misunderstand his character. But action teaches him the truth even if it be a stern one; association affords him the best criticism in the world, and I will venture to say that if he belongs to the Athenæum, though when he enters it he may think himself a genius, if nature has not given him a passionate and creative soul, before a week has elapsed he will become a very sober-minded individual.

I wish to damp no youthful ardour. I can conceive what such an institution would have afforded to the suggestive mind of a youthful Arkwright. I can conceive what a nursing mother such an institu-

tion must have been to the brooding genius of your illustrious and venerated Dalton. It is the asylum of the self-formed; it is the counsellor of those who want counsel, but it is not a guide that will mislead, and it is the last place that will fill the mind of man with false ideas and false conceptions. He reads a newspaper, and his consent oozes out after reading a leading article. He refers to the library, and the calm wisdom of centuries and sages moderates the rash impulse of juvenescence. He finds new truths in the lecture-room, and he goes home with a conviction that he is not so learned as he imagined. In the discussion of a great question with his equals in station, perhaps he finds that he has met his superiors in intellect.

These are the means by which the mind of man is brought to a healthy state, by which that self-knowledge that has always been lauded by sages may be most securely attained; it is a rule of universal virtue, and from the senate to the counting-house will be found of universal application. Then to the youth of Manchester, representing now the civic youth of this great country and this great district, I now appeal. Let it never be said again that the fortunes of these institutions were in danger. Let them take advantage of this hour of prosperity calmly to examine, and deeply to comprehend, the character of that institution in which these vast interests are involved, and which for them may afford a relaxation which brings no pang, and yields information which may bear them to fortune.

It is to them I appeal with confidence, because I feel I am pleading their cause — with confidence, because in them I repose my hopes. When nations fall

it is because a degenerate race intervenes between the class that is created and the class that is doomed. Let them then remember what has been done for them; the leaders of their community have not been remiss in regard to their interests. Let them remember that when the inheritance devolves upon them, they are not only to enjoy but to improve. They will one day succeed to the high places of this great community: let them recollect those who lighted the way for them; and when they have wealth, when they have authority, when they have power, let it not be said that they were deficient in public virtue and public spirit. When the torch is delivered to them let them also light the path of human progress to educated man.

OPENING OF LETTERS, Feb. 28, 1845.*

[This is a complaint of Sir Robert Peel's language and demeanour towards the independent section of his followers: a complaint which was endorsed not only by the opposition newspapers, but still more decidedly by the *Times*. The question arose in the previous year, in consequence of a petition presented by Mr. Duncombe from Mazzini and others complaining that their letters had been opened at the General Post Office. A committee of inquiry was appointed. But their report was considered so unsatisfactory that on the meeting of Parliament in 1845 Mr. Duncombe moved for another. The motion was defeated by a large majority, and he then moved for the production of certain Post Office books and was again defeated. On each occasion he was supported by Mr. Disraeli, who in the second of his two speeches illustrated the conduct of Sir Robert Peel in relation to the agricultural interest by an image which has now become historical. It may seem at first sight perhaps that there is little in common between free trade and the opening of private letters. But Mr. Disraeli was complaining of Sir Robert's demeanour towards the more independent members of his own party, and thus was able to introduce his sarcasm in an apostrophe which did not seem irrelevant.]

MR. DISRAELI: Sir, the honourable member for Finsbury has brought before the House his proposition in an intelligible shape. He has laid before the House the statement of a personal grievance, and he has distinctly affirmed to us that in making that statement he makes no personal attack upon any individual.

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Sir, I should have hardly thought that it was necessary to make that declaration, had it not been for the associations connected with this motion, which perhaps originated in other debates to which I myself mean not to refer. If the case of the last general warrant* that was issued by a Secretary of State be compared with the last Post Office warrant that was issued by a Secretary of State, I think we may clearly in the parallel discover that no personal imputation need be appealed to in order to vindicate a public right. Sir, there is not the slightest doubt that the last general warrant issued by a Secretary of State was an act of tyranny, an act of oppression, an act essentially iniquitous; but no one pretends that the Secretary of State who issued that general warrant was a tyrant, an oppressor, a man eminently unjust. On the contrary, Lord Halifax† was a very good sort of man.

Society under these circumstances steps in and settles the rule which decides these questions. It acknowledges that usage is the moral vindication of the minister; but while it frees the minister from any personal stigma, it does not emancipate him from the consequence of an illegal act. That is the question which now engages the attention of the House and interests the nation. We are not to seek what may be the cause that has brought it forward; I give the honourable gentleman who has brought it forward credit for the same purity of motive as the minister appealed to, and I must say I was much surprised that a minister of the Crown should ever

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*The warrant on which Wilkes was apprehended in 1763.

†Home Secretary at the time.

have risen in this House and said that the question was only prompted by personal motives.

Sir, it was only in answer to such an imputation that I ever myself stated that no personal feeling in this respect could influence me, and made one of those disclaimers which are generally disagreeable and inconvenient, but which, after all, are only addressed to the individual concerned. I am myself perfectly satisfied that, whatever ebullition of feeling came from another quarter, the person in question did not misconceive my motive. The honourable gentleman, the member for Finsbury, has placed the case neatly and completely before us. He says, 'If my letters have been stopped and opened by the Government, the officers of the Crown and Post Office have committed a breach of privilege, unless they have done so upon the warrant of a minister.' If they have done so, let them produce the warrant; he will then be in a position to appeal to the House and the country for the vindication of his character, or to the courts of law, to decide whether that warrant is a legal instrument or not.

Sir, I am at a loss to comprehend what answer can be given to that direct appeal. This is the view naturally taken by the honourable gentleman in his individual case. He feels the individual grievance—he naturally looks to the individual remedy. All that he wants is the warrant. All that he wants is an opportunity of vindicating his innocence, or allowing others to prove his guilt. I believe that the country requires more. I believe that the country is anxious that the warrant should be produced—not merely that it should vindicate the honour and conduct of the honourable gentleman, or the reverse; but that an opportunity should be afforded to the subjects of the

Queen to say whether that instrument is a legal one; and how is it possible for any person to have that opportunity unless the House interferes, as it is requested in the present instance? It is not asked to exercise its prerogative and privilege to vindicate any gentleman who cannot vindicate himself by law.

The situation of the honourable gentleman is that which may be the situation of any member of this House, of any subject of the Queen, to-morrow. It is exactly this, 'Will you put me in a position worse than the meanest subject of the realm is placed in? Will you say that I have experienced a wrong and that I have not a remedy?' Now, Sir, that is the question, I believe, in which the country is interested. That it is also interested in the question whether this power should be exercised under any circumstances, no one can doubt. Some gentlemen may rise and say that this is a power that ought always to be at the disposition of Government; some may say that it is disgraceful to this country that foreign nations should know we exercise it; and others may rise and state that that can hardly be the case, since every foreign nation does itself exercise it; but there is this distinction — though foreign nations always do exercise this power, foreign nations never believed that England did. It resolves itself into this question — are you content to be ruled by a popular government, or do you wish to be ruled by a government of police? No doubt a popular government has many inconveniences. No doubt it would be much better that the question of the Sugar Duties, for instance, should be settled without any loss of time. It is a great inconvenience to trade, as the right honourable gentleman (Sir Robert Peel) has often told us,

that there should be any discussion on the subject. I don't doubt that if the question were settled by the right honourable gentleman himself, in his cabinet, it would be equally well, perhaps better. This is one of the inconveniences we endure for popular government, and so it is with reference to the correspondence of individuals. You have a popular government, you have a strong local system; you may, by not prying into the correspondence of individuals, be subjected to great calamities. You may have Bristol burnt, as Bristol was burnt; you may have Birmingham assailed, as you had it assailed. But the country strikes the balance. It agrees to suffer those great injuries for the sake of a popular government, instead of a government of police; and the country, after all, must decide it.

Now, Sir, I believe that is the impartial view as regards the general question. As regards the country, though sympathising with the honourable gentleman who presses the case of his individual wrong, they desire also an opportunity to decide whether this warrant of the Secretary of State is a legal warrant. They wish to have it decided as the question of general warrants was decided; and if it be a legal warrant, then it becomes an open question fit for discussion, whether such a power should be allowed in a free country to subsist. Sir, the honourable gentleman who has introduced the question to-night seems, in some remarks he has made, to think that an impartial discussion of the question is impossible in this House. Certainly, when I recollect the last debate, to which I need not refer, I am not surprised, from the elaborate misconception of former debates, that the honourable gentleman should fear this discussion should not

be free. But I cannot believe, although the honourable gentleman fears, that any intimidation is purposely enacted in this House; but there is not the slightest doubt that on both occasions now before us, and upon others which have occurred within the last two or three years, there have been misunderstandings, founded on the misconceptions — perhaps mutual misconceptions — of the relations that subsist between the leader of a party and the supporters of a party.

Sir, I may allude to these circumstances, because the honourable gentleman seems to think that on this occasion he is not secure of a fair discussion of this question; and because, unless there is a correct understanding on this head, I almost despair of his receiving that fair discussion. When the balanced state of parties ceased in this House, it must have been pretty evident to those who had any idea of the constituent elements of such an assembly, that what we call party feeling, though for a short time from custom preserved, would eventually evaporate. There were very few, if any, party questions, and it was pretty clear that in a popular assembly of more than six hundred persons, questions would constantly arise in which gentlemen, though sitting on different sides of the House, without compromising the elementary principles of their politics, would very often divide in the same lobby, and very often in discussions take the same side.

An honourable gentleman on the other side gets up and proposes a motion which, at the first blush, does not seem to call in question any of the marked principles of either party — if two parties, indeed, still exist. Some gentleman on this side thinks it a legitimate opportunity to express his opinions on the

question; he happens to support the motion: the Government barely attend to the debate — treat it, perhaps, with indifference or carelessness; the debate trails on; comes into a second night; certain circumstances occur which portend a division, which, I will not say, might be embarrassing — that would be impossible — but disagreeable to the Government. Immediately this takes place, a certain system is brought into play which may prevent, perhaps, that fair discussion the honourable gentleman would seem to despair of, and which I can hardly believe can long be permitted to subsist in this House.

Sir, it seems to me that the system is established on two principles, or rather processes — innuendo and imputation — the insinuation of base motive, and the allegation of factious conduct. Generally it develops itself in this manner. There are some indications of irritability on the Treasury Bench, almost immediately followed by some impatience among the immediate adherents of the Government; and then, as I have observed in several debates, some gentleman gets up — an avowed adherent, or perhaps a secret supporter of the Government — and instantly we have imputations *

* When Mr. Disraeli first spoke against Sir Robert Peel on August 9, 1843, in condemnation of his Irish policy, the *Morning Herald* published a leading article in which appeared the following sentence:—

'We regret to express a harsh opinion of Mr. Disraeli, but a perusal and reperusal of his speech has left on our minds a very strong impression that it was the result of personal disappointment rather than of strong conviction, and that had Mr. Disraeli been made President of the Board of Trade, it is more than probable he would have found in Sir Robert Peel "the great minister" he sighs after.'

Such, however, was not the view taken of his conduct by the leading journal, an independent supporter of Sir Robert, nor yet by the *Morning Chronicle.*

of mean motives — of personal motives — I should say, of corrupt motives — against every gentleman who is perhaps speaking, or about to vote, in opposition to the Government, although the question may not be one that involves any party principle, or any decided principle whatever — a mere matter of practice and detail.

Now, Sir, in this state of affairs, probably at the end of the second or third night of debate, when a course so injurious has naturally produced acerbity in many quarters, perhaps expressions of that bitterness, the sincerity of which is not to be doubted, then at the right moment the right honourable gentleman (Sir Robert Peel) rises to cap the climax, and, probably having just been assured by one of his aides-de-camp that he is secure of a greater majority than ever, he makes a passionate appeal to his supporters, as if the strong Government were in the very throes of dissolution, and uses language which, in my opinion, is susceptible only of one interpretation — that some gentleman on this side of the House would, to embarrass the Government, descend to political collusion and Parliamentary intrigue. Now, Sir, I protest against the system. The system is not founded in justice or fair play. It is not founded upon a real understanding of the principles on which party connections should exist. It is, in fact, a system of tyranny, and as degrading to those who exercise it as to those who endure it.

I take a recent case, because fresh in our memory. When the honourable gentleman (Mr. Duncombe) the other night called our attention to the instance of his grievance, he brought forward a motion which on the face of it every one must see would be opposed by

the Government which exists, and the Government that preceded them. It was, therefore, taken out of the category of party questions. There was a general impression in the House that it was extremely desirable that the decision of the Committee should be supported. That impression was not peculiar to this side of the House. An honourable gentleman, the member for Hull (Sir J. Hanmer), the independence of whose character is, I believe, universally acknowledged, who is certainly as incapable of political intrigue as any gentleman in the House, spoke in the debate without concert or combination, forming his opinion merely on the statement of the honourable member for Finsbury, and being himself particularly inclined to support the decision of the Committee; but he thought it was impossible that this individual instance of the honourable member could be passed over. He expressed his opinion in a frank, manly manner.

It so happened, as probably it will often happen in a popular assembly of this kind, that circumstances during the debate changed to that degree that there was a chance of a division, not embarrassing, but probably more disagreeable to the Government than they at first anticipated, if they condescended to think of a division in the first instance. Well, immediately all the powers of the system were put into action. The right honourable gentleman was brought forward to sanction it by his great example. The division is called for. Gentlemen are brought up from the country to support an endangered Government that never was in peril, and gain a great party triumph when there was not a single party principle at stake, not a single party principle in danger. Now, Sir, I really think there ought to be a more liberal sense of party

connection than that which the Treasury Bench at this moment recognises; and I think the right honourable gentleman at the head of the Government is the last minister who should assume to be a political martinet. I can conceive a minister in a position in which he requires devotion from his party; I can suppose a minister having a very small majority; I can suppose he holds power merely in deference to the wishes of his party; he has a right to say to his supporters, 'I have to fight a very difficult game; I would much rather give up power; still I hold on; but you must be ready at all times to support me with devotion.'

That is not the position of the right honourable gentleman. His position is quite the reverse. He has a very large party to support him, and an opposition before him which, though distinguished doubtless by very eminent talents, and numerically far from contemptible, is not, nevertheless, distinguished for its power of cohesion. The right honourable gentleman is in a position which really would allow him to be indulgent. It is very easy for him to turn round and say, 'What can be more treacherous than this—to be attacked* on the right flank? I am prepared to meet the foe before me; no one ever saw me quail.' The right honourable gentleman forgets that the foe before him never wished to fight him. He may sometimes be assailed on his right flank, but while he boasts of his courage and determination to conquer, the right honourable gentleman forgets that the victory is very easy when nobody opposes him.

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*Sir Robert in a previous speech had complained of being assailed in flank.

There is another reason why he should not adopt this tone — he should not forget that, after all, a great many of his supporters were elected on the hustings under very different circumstances to those under which they sit here. Really, a little philosophical consideration from so great a statesman under such circumstances is the least we might expect. I admit that I for one was sent here by my constituents to sit on this side. He may object to me, although I think he has no great occasion to object, that I am sometimes in a different lobby to himself; but I was sent to swell a Tory majority — to support a Tory ministry. Whether a Tory ministry exists or not I do not pretend to decide; but I am bound to believe that the Tory majority still remains, and therefore I do not think that it is the majority that should cross the House, but only the ministry. I hope that the right honourable gentleman, on reflection, will take a more condescending and charitable view of our conduct than he has hitherto been pleased to do. I am sure myself I never misinterpret the conduct of the right honourable gentleman. I know that there are some who think that he is looking out for new allies. I never believed anything of the kind.

The position of the right honourable gentleman is clear and precise. I do not believe he is looking to any coalition, although many of my constituents do. The right honourable gentleman has only to remain exactly where he is. The right honourable gentleman caught the Whigs bathing, and walked away with their clothes.* He has left them in the full enjoyment of their liberal position, and he is him-

* There is a fable in the fifth volume of the *Craftsman*, called

self a strict conservative of their garments. I cannot conceive that the right honourable gentleman will ever desert his party; they seem never to desert him. There never was a man yet who has less need to find new friends. I, therefore, hope all these rumours will cease. I look on the right honourable gentleman as a man who has tamed the shrew of Liberalism by her own tactics. He is the political Petruchio, who has outbid you all.

If we could only induce the right honourable gentleman, therefore, to take a larger or more liberal view of his Parliamentary position than he seems to adopt in moments too testy for so great a man to indulge in, he would spare us some imputations

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'Truth and Falsehood,' in which occurs the following passage, which may or may not have suggested the above illustration:—

Once on a time, in sunshine weather,
Falsehood and Truth walked out together,
The neighbouring woods and lawns to view,
As opposites will sometimes do.
Through many a blooming mead they pass'd,
And at a brook arrived at last.
At length quoth Falsehood, 'Sister Truth,'
(For so she called her from her youth,)
'What if, to shun yon sultry beam,
We bathe in this delightful stream;
The bottom smooth, the water clear,
And there's no prying shepherd near?'
'With all my heart,' the nymph replied,
And threw her snowy robe aside,
Stript herself naked to the skin,
And with a spring leapt headlong in.
Falsehood more leisurely undress'd
And, laying by her tawdry vest,
Tricked herself out in Truth's array,
And 'cross the meadows tript away.

which I assure him are really painful. If the right honourable gentleman may find it sometimes convenient to reprove a supporter on his right flank,* perhaps we deserve it—I, for one, am quite prepared to bow to the rod; but really, if the right honourable gentleman, instead of having recourse to obloquy, would only stick to quotation, he may rely on it, it would be a safer weapon. It is one he always wields with the hand of a master; and when he does appeal to any authority, in prose or verse, he is sure to be successful, partly because he seldom quotes a passage that has not previously received the meed of Parliamentary approbation, and partly and principally because his quotations are so happy.

The right honourable gentleman knows what the introduction of a great name does in debate, how important is its effect, and occasionally how electrical. He never refers to any author who is not great, and sometimes loved—Canning, for example. That is a name never to be mentioned, I am sure, in the House of Commons without emotion. We all admire his

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* To understand the conclusion of the speech, it is necessary to bear in mind the course which the debate had taken. On February 10, Mr. Duncombe moved for his committee. On the 21st, Lord Howick moved an amendment, which was seconded by Mr. Disraeli, in reply to whom Sir Robert Peel quoted the well-known lines of Canning:—

> Give me the avowed, the erect, the manly foe,
> Firm I can meet, perhaps may turn, the blow;
> But of all plagues, good heaven, thy wrath can send,
> Save me, oh save me, from a candid friend.

The amendment was defeated by 240 votes to 145; but on the 28th Mr. Duncombe returned to the charge, when Mr. Disraeli delivered the above speech.

genuis; we all, at least most of us, deplore his untimely end; and we all sympathise with him in his fierce struggle with supreme prejudice and sublime mediocrity, with inveterate foes and with — 'candid friends.' The right honourable gentleman may be sure that a quotation from such an authority will always tell. Some lines, for example, upon friendship, written by Mr. Canning, and quoted by the right honourable gentleman! The theme, the poet, the speaker — what a felicitous combination! Its effect in debate must be overwhelming; and I am sure, were it addressed to me, all that would remain for me would be thus publicly to congratulate the right honourable gentleman, not only on his ready memory, but on his courageous conscience.*

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*That is, on his having the courage to apply the words of Canning to Mr. Disraeli's treatment of himself when his conscience must tell him how much more applicable they were to his own treatment of Mr. Canning. I am offering no opinion on the merits of this controversy: I only wish to make clear the meaning of the text. Sir Robert said, in reply, that if Mr. Disraeli had wished to withdraw his confidence from him on account of his relations with Mr. Canning, he need not have waited for him to make that quotation; an answer which can hardly be described as crushing or terrific, the epithets bestowed on it by his admirers.

MAYNOOTH, April 11, 1845.*

[On April 3, Sir Robert Peel introduced his Bill for increasing the grant to Maynooth from 9,000*l.* a year to 30,000*l.* In the course of his remarks he dwelt on the poverty-stricken aspect of the college under existing conditions, and the wretched plight of the students, who had to be maintained at an expense of only 23*l.* apiece, while it was found impossible to furnish them all with even separate beds. Sir Robert contended that if the increased grant were objected to as a violation of principle, the existing grant ought to be withdrawn on the same ground. Mr. Disraeli, on the second reading, made great fun of the proposed increase, which would give each student 28*l.* a year instead of 23*l.* But he did not touch the question of principle. He took the Maynooth grant as one out of numerous instances in which the Conservative Government had stultified its former professions, and he urged upon the House the impossibility of keeping up the system of party if this example were generally followed. Without excusing the acerbity which Mr. Disraeli threw into his remarks, we may recognise the truth which they contain. Party is based on the supposition that the balance of the constitution is preserved by the conflict of two opposing theories. When the champions of the one adopt the policy of the other they disturb the machinery by which the whole system works. Were this to happen often the result would follow which Mr. Disraeli deprecated: the constitution would capsize. Exceptional emergencies may justify the temporary neglect of a rule which is essential to its safety. But the experiment is hazardous: while the injury which it is liable to inflict on the political faith and morals of those whom it affects should increase our unwillingness to sanction it. The meaning of Mr. Disraeli's reference to the difference between an ecclesiastical establishment in the days of Mr. Perceval and in the days of Sir Robert Peel is more obscure. He may have intended that the precedent set by the endowment of Maynooth was less dangerous under the old system than it was under

* This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

Young Gulliver and the Brobdingnag Minister.

FROM A CARTOON IN THE LONDON *PUNCH* IN THE YEAR 1845.

(It was at this period that Mr. Disraeli began his attacks upon Sir Robert Peel, which were continued during the lifetime of that statesman.)

(See page 64, *Selected Speeches.*)

NEW TARIFF
INCOME TAX

the new: when the theory of Church and State was still intact, than when it had been infringed by the legislation of 1828 and 1829. Mr. Disraeli said on a subsequent occasion that his speech and vote on the Maynooth Bill broke up the Young England party.]

MR. DISRAELI said: Sir, I should not have intruded for a moment between you and the noble lord* just now, had I the slightest idea that he intended to have caught your eye; but the amendment having been withdrawn, I imagined, and the supposition is very general on this side of the House, that we should not have been honoured with any declaration of opinion from gentlemen opposite. But I am extremely glad that the noble lord has had an opportunity of expressing his opinion on the subject. I trust he does not for a moment imagine that I rise to say anything injurious to his creed, which I respect, or anything offensive to himself and his co-religionists, with whom, in many respects, I sympathise.

I come to the speech of the right honourable gentleman the member for Newark.† My first impression when I listened to that able address was surprise that the right honourable gentleman had passed the gangway to deliver it. It seemed to be worthy of the Treasury Bench which this evening he criticised. It seemed to me that while the right honourable gentleman informed us that though he supported the present Bill, it was not for the reasons which were

* Lord Arundel and Surrey.

† Mr. Gladstone.

adduced by his late right honourable chief; yet nevertheless, had he been in his position, and had he introduced the Bill himself, he might have brought forward, perhaps, unanswerable arguments in its favour; and, deeply sensible of what he styled the circumstances of the case, he might, perhaps, have arrested the flow of those petitions which he confesses has astounded him, but which next week, he informs us, will astonish us still more.

But if I asked myself for a moment what was the necessity for the right honourable gentleman passing the gangway to deliver that speech, ought I rather not to have asked myself the question, what was the necessity for the right honourable gentleman to have crossed the House to deliver that speech? If those are the opinions the right honourable gentleman entertains, how can he, subtle a casuist as he may be, reconcile the course which he now pursues with that which he pursued when in Opposition? Because, after all, what is the result of the adroit argumentation of the right honourable gentleman? It is this: that the principle upon which the State has hitherto been connected with the ecclesiastical affairs of this country is worn out. We must seek a new principle, says the right honourable gentleman, and the Government which I have left because I support it—that Government has discovered a new principle. But where is the new principle? He tells us that it is not now definitely and distinctly made out. He acknowledges that the exposition of it is feeble, a little vague. It is not now complete; we must look to futurity. But if this is the case, have there been no prior attempts to adumbrate this new system, and have no public men in the House raised their voices

to support this principle and advocate this new settlement? Have not their opinions been in fact the foundation of measures brought forward by them as a Government which no longer exists? And has not an opposition to their measures, however imperfect their provisions, or however partially advocated, been the bond of union of the party which opposed them and the foundation of the Conservative theory?

I am perfectly ready to agree with the right honourable gentleman that the relation which exists between the Church and the State in this country is an extremely unsatisfactory one. I have had some opportunities for observation on this head. I have been a member of this House now eight or nine sessions, during a very tempestuous period, the principal part of which has been expended in discussions arising out of this controverted principle. I have read the right honourable gentleman's book.* But the right honourable gentleman in his argument to-night has made one great assumption. He says: 'You have endowed the Anglican Church. Can you, in fact, refuse to endow the Roman Church?' But have we, in fact, endowed the Anglican Church? That is a question. We know that there has been an alliance between the Church and the State; and the very term 'alliance' shows that they met on equal terms, and made an equal compact. But the right honourable gentleman, with all his historical lore, and with all his trained casuistry, cannot place his finger on any page in history which shows that the State endowed the Church.

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* *The State in Its Relations with the Church* (1838).

You may regret that the ecclesiastical power in this country has a large estate. You may say that it makes it predominant, and reason against the policy; but its estate is a fact which none can deny. We deal with it as we deal with the great estates of the territorial aristocracy. Parties may be divided upon the policy of the landed inheritance of the country. But you cannot deny the fact. As practical men we deal with great facts in such a way as to secure the greatest possible benefits. But when we come to the question of fresh relations, and speak of endowing religions, the plea — I will not call it an argument — of analogy fails us. I should like to know what principle you will lay down for the step you are invited to take. I know that the right honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill — and I must make the same apology as the right honourable gentleman the late President of the Board of Trade for referring to his speech — told us that upon this subject there were three courses open to us.

I never heard the right honourable gentleman bring forward a measure without his making the same confession. I never knew the right honourable gentleman bring forward, not what I call a great measure, but a measure which assumes to settle a great controversy — there is a difference — without saying that three courses were open to us. In a certain sense, and looking to his own position, he is right. There is the course the right honourable gentleman has left. There is the course the right honourable gentleman is following; and there is usually the course the right honourable gentleman ought to follow. Perhaps, Sir, I ought to add there is a fourth course; because it is possible for the House of Commons to adopt one

of those courses indicated by the right honourable gentleman, and then, having voted for it, to rescind its vote. That is the fourth course, which in future I trust the right honourable gentleman (Sir Robert Peel) will not forget.

The right honourable gentleman tells us to go back to precedents; with him a great measure is always founded on a small precedent. He traces the steam-engine always back to the tea-kettle. His precedents are generally tea-kettle precedents.

In the present instance, he refers us to Mr. Perceval, and to some odd vote in a dusty corner, from which he infers the principle is admitted. He says, 'You have admitted the principle. Confine yourselves to the details. Don't trouble yourselves about the first and second reading, but reserve all your energies for the Committee, because the principle is admitted.' Now, I deny that, even in the limited sense the right honourable gentleman says, it is admitted. In the first place, that was a temporary vote, and this is not: in fact, it is a permanent one. But I will not make that the ground of opposition to the right honourable gentleman. I will go to the argument, founded on circumstances, of the right honourable gentleman the late President of the Board of Trade:* I am somewhat astonished that he should so completely have given up principles. I looked upon the right honourable gentleman as the last paladin of principle, the very abstraction of chivalry; and, when a question was raised which touched the elementary principle of ecclesiastical institutions, I never supposed that it would be the right honourable

* Mr. Gladstone.

gentleman who would come and give the House the small change of circumstances to settle this great account.

But have circumstances, which ought to settle everything — have circumstances not changed since the time of Mr. Perceval? How astonished must Mr. Perceval's ghost be — if he have a ghost — to be thus appealed to! Were it Mr. Pitt, or Fox, or Burke, whom the right honourable gentleman has quoted to-night, that was brought in to settle this question, we might feel the controlling influence of the great apparition. But Mr. Perceval to be brought in to settle it! Mr. Perceval seems casually to have agreed to a miserable vote about this accidental college at Maynooth. What, let me ask you, was the political and religious situation of affairs by virtue of which Mr. Perceval became Prime Minister at the time of which I am speaking? You had really then in England what you pretend you now have* — a constitution in Church and State. You had that constitution, and members of Parliament, being then necessarily in communion with the Church, were, by virtue of this junction of Church and State, in fact members of a lay synod. What, again, was the situation of the other kingdoms of the empire? You had a Church in Scotland without any Dissenters. What was the case with respect to Ireland? There was a constitution in Church and State, not only in principle, but rigidly adhered to. What do we now see? You have no longer in this country your boasted union of Church and State — you may make speeches to prove that the union is as strong as ever — you may toast it at

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* Cf. Speech on Church, Nov. 25, 1864, in vol. ii.

your public dinners; but I tell you that the constitution in Church and State no longer exists. What is the undeniable fact with respect to this proclaimed union? You know very well that the Church of England is subject to the control of those who no longer exclusively profess communion with that Church.

I am politically connected with a district which is threatened with very severe suffering in consequence of this supposed union with Church and State;* the inhabitants of this district are about to endure one of the greatest blows that could be inflicted upon them, and this solely because it has pleased a Conservative Government to destroy the ancient episcopate under which they have been so long governed. What is now the position of the Church of Scotland? a Church which the late Earl of Liverpool held up as a model, and as the perfection of a religious community, because, I suppose, it gave him no trouble.

What, I repeat, is the present situation of the Church of Scotland? It is rent in twain! Besides the Kirk, there is now the Free Kirk. Well, will you endow the Free Kirk? Will you apply this principle of endowment to sectarians and schismatics of every class? Where will you stop? Why should you stop? And this consideration brings me to the real question before the House. You find your Erastian system crumbling from under your feet. Will you adopt a pantheistic principle? I have unfaltering confidence in the stability of our Church, but I think that the real source of the danger which threatens it is its con-

* This refers to the threatened union of the Sees of Bangor and St. Asaph. Cf. a letter from Bishop Thirlwall to Dr. Whewell, Nov. 18, 1842, in which he condemns the contemplated union in the most forcible and indignant terms.

nection with the State, which places it under the control of a House of Commons that is not necessarily of its communion. Leave the Church to herself, and she will shrink from no contest, however severe. I believe in Ireland itself, if the question be, will you sever the Church from the State, or will you endow the Roman Catholic Church? for my own part, I believe the Protestants of Ireland would say, 'Sever the connection between the Church and the State, and don't endow the Roman Catholics.'

But then we come to this other consideration—are we to recognise a pantheistic principle? Because, judging from all that has passed, I can only come to the conclusion that any body of sectarians that can prove a certain population to Downing Street will be considered to have a claim for endowment. For my own part, I confess I have no great confidence in the cure of souls in that quarter. I observe in Downing Street a disposition to assail our old and deeply-rooted habits. From that quarter has proceeded the assault on the parochial constitution of the kingdom. Will they complete it by attending to our spiritual necessities? I am totally opposed to such a proceeding. I can conceive nothing more opposed to or more utterly at variance with the feelings of this country than a police surveillance, such as is contemplated over the religious ordinances of the people. I deny that the Church of England is the creature of the State. The alliance between them has been one formed and maintained upon equal terms; and if it be attempted, as appears to be the intention, to place all ecclesiastical affairs under the control of Downing Street, and to subject them to the same species of discipline that is enforced in Prussia over the religious

establishments there, I tell the right honourable gentleman that the people of this country will never endure such a system.

This alone is a sufficient ground for me to oppose the Bill before the House. I will not say that this Bill has been introduced into the House in a sinister and insidious manner, though I, in common with others, have formed my conclusions upon that point; but I will assert, what I believe cannot be denied, that this measure has taken the country by surprise. But I have other reasons for opposing this measure. I oppose this Bill on account of the manner in which it has been introduced, and I oppose it also on account of the men by whom it has been brought forward. (Loud cheers.) I am perfectly ready to meet those cheers, and I do so by declaring that I do not think — putting totally out of view the other objections which I entertain — that the gentlemen who are now seated on the Treasury Bench are morally entitled to bring such a measure forward.

This measure, Sir, involves a principle against which the right honourable gentleman and most of his colleagues have all along signally struggled. When I recall to mind all the speeches, and all the motions, and all the votes which have emanated from the present occupants of the Treasury Bench on this and analogous questions; when I remember their opposition to that system of education which they now seek to promote; when I recollect the procession of prelates going up to the palace of the Sovereign to protest against measures analogous to those which the very men who incited that procession are now urging forward; when I recall to mind all the discussions which have taken place here upon the subject

of Irish education; when the Appropriation Clause presents itself to my memory, I consider it would be worse than useless to dwell at any length upon the circumstances which induce me to adopt that opinion. And are we to be told that because those men who took the course to which I have referred have crossed the floor of this House, and have abandoned with their former seats their former professions — are we to be told that these men's measures and actions are to remain uncriticised and unopposed, because they tell us to look to the merits of their measures, and to forget themselves and their former protestations?

Such pretentions naturally lead to the question whether party, as a political instrument, is or is not to continue to govern the discussions of this House? The question touches the whole of their ministry. Let us, therefore, grapple with it, and decide what our future course shall be in this respect. Let us endeavour to put an end to the misconception and subterfuge which now surround us. I am perfectly contented to place the question upon this footing. Now, Sir, it is very easy to complain of party government, and there may be persons capable of forming an opinion on this subject who may entertain a deep objection to that government, and know to what that objection leads.

But there are others who shrug their shoulders, and talk in a slipshod style on this head, who, perhaps, are not exactly aware of what the objections lead to. These persons should understand that if they object to party government, they do, in fact, object to nothing more nor less than Parliamentary government.* A

*Cf. Sir G. C. Lewis's speech on vote of want of confidence, June 10, 1859: 'I fully admit that this motion is a party move

popular assembly without parties — 500 isolated individuals — cannot stand five years against a minister with an organised Government without becoming a servile senate. The objectors to party government may have a good case, on the merits of which I give no opinion. They may say, 'Here are we, the Parliament of England; we have had the virtual sovereignty of this country for a century and a half; we have plunged the country into debt, and we can't pay it. We have done more than patrician Rome in its most rapacious hour; we have mortgaged industry to protect property. We have passed laws on the currency which have affected property more than all the tampering of the coinage by all the sovereigns that have ever existed; we have violently assailed, and now still more enormously menace, the parochial constitution of the country, and, having differed on every other subject, we have at length agreed on one point, that, with relation to civilisation, the wealth and luxury that surround them, the people of England are the hardest worked and the worst fed, the most miserable and degraded population in the world.' This is the case of those who are opposed to party government.

Well, let them carry out their principle; let them vote an Address to the Crown, go up to Buckingham

. . . but I must be permitted to remark that all great questions in this House have been decided by party moves. A Parliamentary system can only be conducted by the combined operation of parties. If we look back to former times we shall find that all great questions — the Reform Bill of 1832, Catholic Emancipation, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws — were dealt with in the way of party moves; and whatever amelioration is to be expected in our present state must, according to the constitution of the House of Commons, proceed from the same sources.'

Palace, fall on their knees before our Sovereign Lady, and restore to her the prerogatives which they have so long usurped and injuriously used. But for the right honourable gentleman, even a pedant in favour of Parliamentary power, who, First Minister of the Crown, declares he is ready to go to war to-morrow with the Lord Chief Justice of England in behalf of your privileges; who is jealous of the slightest interference with your business or your duties, even if you cannot transact or perform them; who enjoins the youth of England not to make brilliant speeches, but to work on railway committees — for him to set up for one who would be independent of Parliament and party is indeed astonishing.

The noble lord opposite, the hereditary leader of the Whig party, which founded Parliamentary government in this country, will, I am sure, not withhold his concurrence with the principles I have laid down. That noble lord, the representative of Mr. Fox, will not gainsay the motto of that great leader —'Measures, and not Men.' And I would ask gentlemen on this side, how has the opposite system answered for them? You have permitted men to gain power and enter place, and then carry measures exactly the reverse to those which they professed in opposition, and they carry these measures by the very means and machinery by which they conducted the opposition, and by which they gained power. And you are reconciled to this procedure by being persuaded that by carrying measures which you disapprove of and they pretend to disrelish, they are making what they call 'the best bargain' for you.

I say that the Parliamentary course is for this House to have the advantage of a Government formed

on distinct principles, and having in consequence a constitutional opposition. Here is a minister who habitually brings forward as his own measures those very schemes and proposals to which, when in opposition, he always avowed himself a bitter and determined opponent. He brings in Canada Bills; he brings in Maynooth Bills; he uses expressions and excites feelings far more objectionable than the measures; but, let me ask the admirers of 'the best bargain' system how they think the right honourable gentleman would have acted had they been introduced by the noble lord opposite? Why, then those Bills would have been at least checked by the opposition, by a constitutional opposition; the questions would have been criticised, the measures would have been modified. Grant even that some measures might have been factiously opposed; that would have been only one of the necessary inconveniences of a Parliamentary government. In what situation are we placed now? Up come all these petitions; in them we hear the loud murmurs of the people, because there is no exponent of a great national opinion in this House, while we have a Government which came into power by an organisation prepared to oppose such measures, now engaged in carrying them. I may on constitutional grounds say the noble lord (Lord John Russell) ought to oppose the present measure, though he approves it, because it is thus brought forward. He will reply, it is for those who act on another set of principles to oppose the Government; consequently the country is without a constitutional opposition to keep the Government in check.

Now, I hope it will not be said, because I have made these observations, which are in entire and

complete relation and affinity to the motion before the House, that I am 'bandying personalities.' Certainly we live in strange times, when Parliamentary criticism on a person in so eminent a position as First Minister of the Crown is to be stopped by his declaring it personality, when it is but fair observation on the character and conduct of a public man, whose career is open to us, with respect to whom we have a right to draw the inferences we think legitimate; and if they are not just they may be contravened in free discussion. I do not know what the House thinks of this system of putting down Parliamentary discussion. It is not a very new experiment; it has been tried in — I will not say another House, for that must not be referred to — but it has been tried in what is called 'another place.'

I do not know whether the position occupied by 'another place' in the public estimation and the public eye is one of which the members of the House of Commons are particularly ambitious. I remember when we used to toast 'another place' with three times three and nine times nine; the independence of 'another place' was once a favourite toast at all Conservative dinners. Where is the independence of 'another place' now? It is not Radicalism, it is not the revolutionary spirit of the nineteenth century which has consigned 'another place' to illustrious insignificance; it is Conservatism and a Conservative dictator. Are you prepared to meet the same fate? Every time a member expresses any opinions not absolutely agreeable to the minister of the day, is he to be stopped by a charge of 'bandying personalities'? Whenever the young men of England allude to any great principle of political life or Parliamentary con-

duct, are they to be recommended to go to a railway committee? I have no doubt it would be very agreeable if this House were in the same condition, especially with regard to the Bill, as 'another place.'

I know the elements of this House are different, that the characters of the individuals who would control us are different; but the process with both bodies, although it varies, is in result the same. It may break the spirit in 'another place,' and it may lower the tone in this; 'another place' may be drilled into a guard-room, and the House of Commons may be degraded into a vestry; but the consequence may be exactly similar, and that consequence may be that you will have Bills like the Maynooth Bill, and that still more important measure * which, after the admission of the right honourable member for Newark, may be looked on as a fact, if not accomplished, yet ascertained, introduced, and carried through this House, and of course through 'another place': and you may have the floor of this House covered with petitions and the lobby of 'another place' crowded with constituents who have left us in despair; but, whatever may be the degree of public feeling, whatever may be the depth of national sentiment, if you choose to support a Government that announces no distinctive principles, which is in turn supported by an opposition which does not oppose, I am certain there is no spirit and no nation that can resist a 'cross' so deeply laid and so deliberately accomplished.

This Maynooth Bill, I suppose, is introduced instead of the Irish Registration Bill, the necessity for which was so apparent when the right honourable

* Endowment of Roman Catholic clergy.

gentleman was in opposition. It is brought in after a four years' experiment of lowering your tone, and working that, constitutionally, by means of a Whig opposition. During those four years what has the Conservative party endured? What has it experienced? What is the treatment it has been obliged to submit to, till the thing was so ripe that even your murmurs are not noticed? This Bill brings affairs to a crisis; the question is not to be decided on its merits; it is to be decided on the fact—who are the men who bring it forward? If you are to have a popular government, if you are to have a Parliamentary administration, the conditions antecedent are, that you should have a Government which declares the principles upon which its policy is founded, and then you can have on them the wholesome check of a constitutional opposition.

What have we got instead? Something has risen up in this country as fatal in the political world as it has been in the landed world of Ireland—we have a great Parliamentary middle-man. It is well known what a middle-man is: he is a man who bamboozles one party and plunders the other, till, having obtained a position to which he is not entitled, he cries out, 'Let us have no party questions, but a fixity of tenure.' I want to have a commission issued to inquire into the tenure by which Downing Street is held. I want to know whether the conditions of entry have been complied with, and whether there are not some covenants in the lease which are already forfeited. I hope I shall not be answered by 'Hansard.' I am not surprised the right honourable gentleman should be so fond of recurring to that great authority; he has great advantages; he can look over a record

of thirty, and more than thirty, years of an eminent career.

But that is not the lot of every one; and I may say as a general rule I am rather surprised that your experienced statesmen should be so fond of recurring to that eminent publication. What, after all, do they see on looking over a quarter of a century or more even of their speeches in 'Hansard'? What dreary pages of interminable talk, what predictions falsified, what pledges broken, what calculations that have gone wrong, what budgets that have blown up! And all this, too, not relieved by a single original thought, a single generous impulse, or a single happy expression! Why, 'Hansard,' instead of being the Delphi of Downing Street is but the Dunciad of politics. But I want something more than quotations from 'Hansard' to account for the process by which parties have been managed in this House. It is a system so matter of fact and yet so fallacious—taking in everybody, though everybody knows he is deceived—so mechanical and yet so Machiavellian, that I can hardly say what it is, except a sort of humdrum *hocus pocus* in which the order of the day is read to take in a nation.

Now, the system is to be brought to a test to-night. Will the House support the Government in a measure which, according to the highest authority—one that has quitted the cabinet for some reason that has not been given, and who, probably, may join it again under circumstances equally obscure—is, in fact, an endowment for the Roman Catholic priesthood of Ireland? If any vote were at stake in which the social and political equality of the Roman Catholic population were concerned, I would go as far as any man in the House, and perhaps further than many.

But, Sir, no one pretends that this is now the question. The grounds on which I oppose this motion are not those of hostility to their claims, but grounds which they themselves, after the clamour of the moment, must feel are legitimate ones. I cannot admit the plea of *ad misericordiam,* founded on the state of Maynooth. Surely men of high spirit and bearing cannot for a moment bring themselves to suppose that we shall be induced to vote for the measure on this plea; it would be an insult to them to suppose so. I know there are Roman Catholic colleges, well organised and well ordered, that are not in the condition of Maynooth; there are sectarian colleges in England with larger revenues even than those now proposed to be given by the Government in support of Roman Catholic principles. What sustains them? The sympathy of their co-religionaries. I cannot believe, therefore, that those gentlemen will, upon reflection, be anxious that this Bill should pass. I do not think it a measure either flattering to their pride, or solacing to their feelings; I do not think it either a great or a liberal measure.

The right honourable gentleman is a supreme master of Parliamentary tactics, and when he found he was not receiving from the seats behind him the once abundant chorus of applause to which he was accustomed, he went forward to the red box, and saying, 'I know this is a great grant to Maynooth,' obtained the heedless assent of some honourable gentlemen opposite to the assertion.

But if the right honourable gentleman's principle is correct, I think it is not a great grant; I think it is a mean, a meagre, and a miserable grant. If the Roman Catholic priesthood are to be educated by the

State it must be something greater than the difference between *23l.* and *28l.*, something higher than the difference between three in a bed and two. That is not the way, under any circumstances, in which I would approach a reverend priesthood. I cannot believe, therefore, that the Roman Catholic gentlemen on reflection — and I hope they will have time for reflection — will vote for this measure when they consider what it is. Who is he who introduces it? It is the same individual whose bleak shade fell on the sunshine of your hopes for more than a quarter of a century. Will not this consideration affect you? What if it be a boon? I deny that it is one — but if it were the boon it is said to be, would you accept it from hands polluted? It is not from him you ought to accept it — not from him who, urged on, as he reluctantly admitted, by fatal State necessity, accompanied the concession of your legitimate political claims by the niggardly avowal that he was obliged to concede them.

As to the Whigs, I am almost in despair of appealing to their hereditary duties, their constitutional convictions, or their historical position; but I should have thought that the noble lord opposite was almost weary of being dragged at the triumphal car of a conqueror who did not conquer him in fair fight. I think the noble lord might have found some inspiration in the writings of that great man whom he has so often quoted, and whose fame he attempts to emulate. I should have thought that a man of the mind and spirit of the noble lord — and he has a thoughtful mind and a noble spirit — might have felt that Mr. Fox would have taken that course which I still think the noble lord, touched by his high posi-

tion, and the responsibility of that position, will still adopt. His party may have fallen, but it is still one connected with the history of this country. Other parties have also fallen; they have been reconstructed and they have been destroyed. The noble lord is not in so fallen a position as that in which the right honourable gentleman was in 1831. But let the noble lord beware of this—let him beware of rising from that degraded position again by the same system of tactics.* They may bring some short-lived success, but upon conditions which I believe the gallant spirit of the noble lord would disdain. I do not then despair, Sir, of the aid of the Roman Catholic gentry of Ireland, or of the Whigs of England, in opposing this measure respecting Maynooth, as well as of those who would reject it on exclusively Protestant principles, or on the general principle against State interference which I have attempted to uphold.

But, whatever may be the various motives and impulses which animate these different sections of opinion, there is at least one common ground for co-operation—there is one animating principle which may inspire us all. Let us in this House re-echo that which I believe to be the sovereign sentiment of this country; let us tell persons in high places that cunning is not caution, and that habitual perfidy is not high policy of State. On that ground we may all join. Let us bring back to this House that which it has for so long a time past been without—the legitimate influence and salutary check of a constitutional opposition. That is what the country requires, what

* *I. e.* As those by which Sir Robert rose.

the country looks for. Let us do it at once in the only way in which it can be done, by dethroning this dynasty of deception, by putting an end to this intolerable yoke of official despotism and Parliamentary imposture.

MR. WALPOLE'S RESOLUTION, June 3, 1862.

[On Tuesday, June 3, the House of Commons met to consider a resolution proposed by Mr. Stansfeld to the effect that 'the national expenditure was capable of reduction without compromising the safety, the independence, or the legitimate influence of the country.' Lord Palmerston met the resolution by an amendment which was ultimately carried by 367 votes to 65. But Mr. Walpole had given notice of another amendment to be moved in substitution for Lord Palmerston's, which would have received the support of the entire Conservative party, and of a good many Liberals besides. Referring to this amendment before the debate began, Lord Palmerston observed that 'the question which the House would now be called on to decide was whether gentlemen who sat on the ministerial or the opposite benches were best entitled to the confidence of the House and the country.' By this language he drew from Mr. Walpole a declaration that he would not, under those circumstances, take the responsibility of moving his amendment. The effect was, of course, to reduce the debate, which might have involved a serious check to the ministry, to the level of a mere *reconnoissance.* Mr. Walpole did not formally give notice of his intention to abstain from moving until the main question had been put on Mr. Stansfeld's resolution; but it had been made generally known to the House, and is referred to by Mr. Disraeli in the following speech.]

MR. DISRAELI: From the address of the noble lord (Palmerston) I observed that one topic was studiously omitted; he avoided all reference to the present condition of our finances; though that position is described by a member of Her Majesty's Government as unhealthy, and is believed by Parliament and the people of England to be dangerous. The subject of national

expenditure has been brought somewhat suddenly, it may be, but most earnestly under the consideration both of Parliament and of the people. I am sure I do not misrepresent the general feeling of the House when I say there is a desire to effect all practicable reductions in that expenditure which are consistent with the complete efficiency of the public service, with the security of our shores, and with the guardianship of all those interests abroad which constantly engage our attention.

Let me take the first point to which the noble lord adverted, and to which the first part of the honourable gentleman's resolution refers. Let us look to the question of our defences at home, of which we have lately heard so much. Well, that is not a new question. We have been establishing and completing our home defences for a considerable period. It is a subject which has engaged the attention of Parliament and the resources of this country now for ten years. Ten years ago a ministry was formed for the sole purpose of establishing a militia throughout this country, founded on a popular principle. Well, a militia on that principle was established — most successfully established. During the ten years that have elapsed that militia has been embodied and disembodied, and has fed our regular army with soldiers equal to veterans. It has supplied our garrisons in the colonies with men whose discipline those who have commanded them have recognised as equal to that of the line. When the war was finished the militia was disembodied, and an appeal was made to the men who composed it for their annual attendance.

At the time it was said that appeal was illusory. It has been responded to with an alacrity which we

have seen displayed even within the last few weeks —I may say days. The manner in which the militia has responded to the call made on it has shown us what an army has been completed, and I hope permanently established. And, Sir, the Government that ten years ago was called specifically into existence to effect that object accomplished another great object connected with our home defences. I allude to the establishment of the Channel Fleet. After that period this country was engaged in a war, and its immediate attention was for the moment turned from the specific object of its home defences; but the indirect effect of that war very much increased our means of defence at home for it produced a perfect army in this country, which in every branch and every military attribute is recognised now as inferior to none in existence.

Well, Sir, subsequently to all this we witnessed one of those spontaneous acts of public spirit which eminently distinguishes England, and now the great Volunteer movement produces an army admirable in its discipline—and which, I trust, will be of a permanent character. What will be the consequence of all those great incidents, as far as our home defences are concerned? Counting our regular army, which for some years on the average has never numbered less than 100,000 men, you have in England, or, at least, in the United Kingdom, a body of disciplined men, accustomed to the use of arms, of not less than from 350,000 to 400,000 men, a garrison for these islands equal almost to the army of France; and in addition you have the command of the Channel with your fleet. Therefore I say, as far as our home defences are concerned, we have not been idle or un-

successful in our exertions; and it is difficult to conceive how any country can be in a position more completely secure than Great Britain is at this present moment.

If, however, there be any proposition by which our home defences can be really improved, I am quite sure Parliament will listen to those propositions from any Government with the utmost attention; but for the present this great result remains, and none can deny it—that we have in England, and have had in England now for some years, a regular garrison—a national garrison I may call it—composed of regular troops, our militia, our volunteers, and other elements which it would be wearisome to dwell upon—scarcely less than 400,000 men; and we have in the Channel an efficient and commanding fleet. I am myself a supporter of such a state of affairs as regards our defences, and not with reference to any country contiguous to us, or with any disposition of hostility towards our neighbours.

My opinion is that this state of things ought to exist abstractedly, if I may use the term, with regard to the defences of this country. I would not recommend that programme of defences on the assumption of friendship on the part of our neighbours. That is an element which I, for one, have no wish to bring into consideration. On the other hand, I do not, as the noble lord does, argue for the necessity of those means of defence on the animosity of our neighbours. We ought to look to our means of defence on this principle alone—whether they are adequate to the position which this country occupies. I must say I was astonished that, even within the recent period of the last few weeks, when we had a discussion on this

subject, the noble lord at the head of the Government concluded the debate by stating his view of the defences to be that the country should be prepared for an invasion of its shores by its nearest neighbour—prepared for some midnight foray of a cordial ally. Such a declaration confounds civilisation; and if a policy be founded on such principles, it must lead to national disaster.

So much for our national defences; so much for that subject which has engaged the country and Parliament, more or less, for ten years. And what is this country you have so properly guarded and defended? Is it a country without any spirit of its own—is it like some other countries to which I shall not more particularly refer, where the Government is one of police, where there is no political liberty, no freedom of opinion, and where the Government can only trust to guards to protect them? The Government is unworthy to govern this country who forgets that the people of England are the most enthusiastic in the world. There are more excitable people—the people of France, for instance; but there is no people so enthusiastic as England has shown herself to be on this question of national defences. In this country, protected by 400,000 men and a commanding fleet in the Channel, to say that freemen are in danger of midnight invasion from cordial allies is a mystification too monstrous for belief.

I now come to the next point—our interests abroad. I have been trying to give some meaning to a phrase so vague. It has been stated that in all our stations throughout the world we should be defended by armed forces—that our foreign garrisons should be efficient; that our fortifications should be strong; and

that our great naval stations in the Mediterranean and the West Indies should be commanding. Well, Sir, these are the sources of influence which England possesses in her intercourse with foreign Powers and foreign Courts. When it is known that the garrisons of England are strong, that her fleets are commanding, that her extensive and unrivalled commerce in every quarter and in every clime is adequately defended, no doubt these are sources of respect and influence for us with foreign Courts and countries.

But allow me to say that there is also another great source of influence, and perhaps the greatest that England possesses with foreign countries. I pretend to no more experience of foreign Courts and foreign statesmen than must have fallen to the lot of many, perhaps the majority of gentlemen in this House; but I have seen some, and I have in the course of my life been in communication with some of the most eminent statesmen of various countries—men of different political parties and varied experience—and I have always heard them use this language with regard to the influence of England: that the real cause of that influence of England—which influence is, perhaps, on an average, the most permanent throughout the Continent—has arisen from this circumstance, that England is the only country which, when it enters into a quarrel that it believes to be just, never ceases its efforts until it has accomplished its aim. Whereas (I do not now speak of present days and existing States) it was always felt in old times and generations that are past—and honourable gentlemen can ascertain whether the present state of Europe makes any difference in this matter—that, with scarcely an exception, there was not a

State in Europe, not even the proudest and most powerful, that could ever enter into a third campaign.

Well, what gave us this power of continuing war into which we had entered, and in which we were ready to persevere because we believed it to be just? It was the financial reserve of England. It was the conviction that the reserves of England, when we once chose to engage in a quarrel, were such that it was not a question of one, two, or three campaigns, but that, as we have proved in old days, our determination, supported by our resources, would allow us to prepare for an indefinite struggle when we had an adequate and worthy object in view. If, however, you allow your finances to be sapped and weakened, you are at the same time weakening this prime source of your authority. You may have these garrisons in foreign parts, these improved armaments, and these fleets of commanding power, but if you have also omitted the principal source of your power—namely, a sound state of your finance—you may find you have omitted one of the most important elements of that influence abroad and that security for maintaining it of which we have heard so much.

We are asked sometimes, 'Why do you not propose something definite when you talk of retrenchment?' The answer is very obvious. In the position in which we stand we must deal with general truths and aim at general conclusions. It is only for gentlemen on the other side of that table to come forward with specific propositions on specific items; but I think it is not difficult even for those who sit on this side the table to place before the House some results which, if I have not mistaken the character of the

House of Commons and the common sense of England, will not be listened to with carelessness and inattention. Whether you look at your home defences at the present moment, or the means which you possess of guarding your interests and maintaining your influence abroad, you have made adequate preparations. I have taken the necessary pains to calculate the cost of these home defences, of which I think we may be justly proud, and with which we may be perfectly satisfied.

What also is the cost of those fleets and garrisons which we have abroad to guard our interests and maintain our influence? From an official document, of which every honourable member is in possession, I have made a calculation of the united cost and expenditure of the country under these two heads. I find that when I have ascertained this expenditure it does not account for our military and naval expenditure by a vast sum; that, after supplying the sums necessary to maintain these defences and guard these interests, there still remains a vast amount of public expenditure under these heads that is still unaccounted for. Then, I say, at the first glance, there would appear to be some margin even in that view of the case of considerable and, in the present state of our finances, of necessary reduction. But then a plausible objection may be taken—and I am here to acknowledge its plausibility and to answer it, for we hear it every day when this question is brought forward—'You forget that the naval and military condition of England is, at the present moment, one of transition; that you are changing in this age of scientific discovery, and especially of scientific discovery as applied to armaments, your whole system of armaments, and

that this leads to the vast expenditure which cannot be accounted for.'

Well, that is a satisfactory solution, provided one condition is fulfilled—that it is true. I will now examine its truth. We have before us now, in the statements of Ministers and in papers on our table, authentic information on these subjects. What have you done with regard to the armaments of your army, navy, and other forces during the last few years? You have done great things. You have completely armed your regular troops, in amount exceeding 200,000 men, with the most perfect weapon of modern invention—the Enfield rifle; you have armed your militia, your volunteers, you have armed even Canada with the Enfield rifle; and, having done all this, you have in store at this moment a number of Enfield rifles capable of arming your regular forces, your militia, your volunteers, and even Canada for the space of ten years. If you have effected these great results with your small arms, what have you done with your artillery? You have armed the whole of your foreign garrisons with Armstrong guns; you have armed your domestic garrisons with the same weapon; you have completely armed the whole of your field artillery with Armstrong guns; and you have for this current year 1862–63 voted money which will produce nearly 2,500 Armstrong guns, two-thirds having a calibre which altogether gives you about 5,000 guns of that character. You have done more than this—you have at this moment military stores which both in number and effectiveness exceed any collection of stores which this country has had for the last fifty years.

My authority for that statement is one who long sat in this House, who was a great advocate of mili-

tary expenditure, and a most distinguished member of the military profession; and I believe I am right in saying that from the siege-train to the ambulance England was never so profusely and so effectively furnished as at the present moment. The conclusion we must come to when we find that these armaments have been carried out so effectively and so completely, and apparently are so near entire fulfilment, is that the time has come — and, in the present condition of affairs, we are compelled to ask whether it has come or not — when a considerable reduction may be made in our naval and military expenditure without the least impairing our home defences or the efficiency of those forces which defend our interests abroad.

But I may be told that I forget that, though our armaments are complete, our forces amounting to hundreds of thousands of men armed with the Enfield rifle, with arms enough in store to last for ten years — though at the end of the year we may have 5,000 Armstrong guns, two-thirds of which are of the highest calibre; though all our garrisons abroad, and nearly all at home, and all our field batteries are furnished with this unrivalled weapon — yet a great change has taken place in the materials by which ships are constructed. Let us see whether we cannot examine that point with some calmness. I am not going to enter into any controversy with the noble lord as to the relative number of iron ships possessed by France and ourselves. I think the time has not yet come when the rival powers of England and France in that respect are to be counted by iron ships.

But, as the noble lord will always thrust his view of the question before us, I have taken the best pains

I could to inform myself upon the subject, and I believe the statement repeated by the noble lord is a monstrous mystification. The noble lord always seems to count an order to construct an iron ship as an actual ship, forgetting altogether that, in France, when an order is given in the bureau of the Minister of Marine it is executed at leisure; sometimes it takes ten years to execute, and occasionally three or four years elapse before the construction of the vessel is commenced. But there is to be no rivalry about iron ships — our navy is not to be equal to France, but it is to be greatly superior. It is a necessary condition of our geographical position and our political power that our navy should be as superior to the navy of France as the army of France is superior to ours.

But this I wish to impress upon the House — that the utmost caution and consideration are necessary in reconstructing the navy with these new materials, and in the case of these iron ships we must not conclude too rashly and too rapidly when any apparent novelty has been introduced that it is instantly to be recognised as the type and model of perfection. When these great changes take place some caution and some temperateness of conduct are requisite, and I take it for granted that the noble lord is deeply conscious of the value of those virtues, because, though the whole resources of the country have been at his command since he held office, he has generally spent them in building wooden ships. If France has that superiority over us which the noble lord tells us she has, if she really has thirty-six to our twenty-five, more shame to the noble lord. Where are all the millions the noble lord has had?

[Lord Palmerston: The right honourable gentleman has misapprehended me. I said France had thirty-six built and building to our twenty-five.]

Mr. Disraeli: The same distinction applies to both; therefore I am quite right in my representation of the noble lord's argument. But I have not done yet with the noble lord on iron ships. If iron ships are wanted, let no false principles of economy prevent us voting the money, but take care first that they are wanted, and take care next that when the money is voted it is expended on iron ships. There was an extraordinary case only last session, when the noble lord, or some of his colleagues in this House under his immediate orders—though I rather think it was the noble lord himself—came down to this House and addressed us on this alarming subject, the iron navy of France. It was late in the session, and he succeeded in extorting from an appalled House of Commons an estimate of somewhere about 350,000*l.* for building iron ships. It so happens that not one shilling of this money has been employed in the construction of iron ships, but has been appropriated to an entirely different purpose.

I don't think the noble lord will be able to deny the accuracy of that statement; and I say it is a monstrous thing for a minister to come down here to make sensation speeches about the iron navy, to obtain large votes from a credulous and enthusiastic House of Commons, and then to prorogue Parliament, as he will prorogue it again in a very short time, and then expend the resources of the country he has thus obtained for other objects and purposes. The conclusion I have arrived at from these views—general views, I admit, but founded on authentic facts—

is that at this moment we are entering into a great expenditure for military and naval purposes, which are not necessary for the security of our shores, or for the maintenance of our interests and influence abroad. These are considerations which I think the House should not allow wholly to escape its consideration. I am not at all prepared to agree that the expenditure of the present Government has been justified; but, as I said the other night, what is the use of talking about the past? What I want to know is, what is to be done at present and for the future; how, when we have before us a prospect of continuous deficits, we are to make both ends meet.

I will make no comment upon the amendment of the honourable gentleman (Mr. D. Griffith) who sits up aloft—I will come to the amendment of the noble lord who, having on several occasions expressed his opinion that there ought to be no resolution whatever on the subject, concludes by proposing two resolutions, and accompanies the proposal of those two resolutions with the lamest and most unsatisfactory reasons to account for them which I ever heard; because it was perfectly open to the noble lord to meet the resolution of the honourable member for Halifax and any succeeding amendment which became a substantive motion by the simple negative. It was not the least necessary for the noble lord to bring forward any resolutions, but if he did he should, at least, have brought forward satisfactory ones. Are these resolutions satisfactory? The noble lord is 'deeply impressed with the necessity of economy in every department of the State,' and that is the first time I ever heard he was. You may talk of eating the leek,

but I think that is a supper which may satisfy even an opposition. Well! the noble lord being 'deeply impressed with the necessity of economy in every department of the State,' is at the same time, 'mindful of its obligations to provide for the security of the country at home, and the protection of its interests abroad.' I think it is more than an obligation: but let that pass.

The noble lord says, 'This House observes with satisfaction the decrease which has already been effected in the national expenditure.' Upon the principle that it is no use talking of what has passed, I was perfectly prepared to vote for that statement in the amended resolution of the right honourable gentleman the member for the University of Cambridge; but still, as we are got into criticism, I am bound to say to the House that there is not a word of truth in it. For reasons which I will give the House when the proper time comes, we would not in the amendment disturb a single word of the resolution of the noble lord which we could avoid altering, and we passed over expressions which many of my friends did not approve, and language to which I could not help objecting on the point of veracity.

Let us come to the resolution of the noble lord—'We observe with satisfaction the decrease which has already been effected in the national expenditure.' The figures are very shortly stated, and they are very instructive. Our expenditure in 1860–61 was 72,521,-825*l.* I deduct from that expenditure some items, and I am sure the House will recognise their fairness. I deduct the China vote, 3,043,000*l.*; a second China vote, 1,111,920*l.*; and I deduct the fortifications, 578,-387*l.* The total of those deductions is 4,733,307*l.*,

which being taken from 72,521,825*l.*, leaves the real expenditure, without those exceptional items, for that year at 67,788,518*l.* Now take the expenditure for the year 1861–62, in which these boasted deductions have been made. Our expenditure for that year was 70,838,441*l.* I deduct the China vote, 1,230,000*l.*; the *Trent* affair, 900,000*l.*, which is the estimate of the minister; and fortifications, 158,185*l.* The total deduction is 2,288,185*l.*, which being taken from 70,838,441*l.* leaves the expenditure 68,550,256*l.* So that the expenditure of 1860–61 was really 67,788,000*l.*, and the expenditure of 1861–62, 68,550,000*l.* Then we come to the expenditure of 1862–63, which is the present year. That expenditure is 69,000,293*l.* I deduct 500,000*l.* for China and 163,000*l.* for fortifications, and that leaves 68,337,293*l.* Here is the comparative expenditure for the three years. In 1860–61 it was 67,788,518*l.*; in 1861–62 it was 68,550,256*l.*; and in the present year 1862–63 it is not 68,550,000*l.*; but it is 68,337,000*l.*

Therefore, I am glad to see there is 150,000*l.* which will allow us to vote for this resolution absolutely with a clear conscience. The noble lord says, 'The House observes with satisfaction the decrease which has already been effected in the national expenditure,' and if that decrease be of the character which I have shown, I fear the House will view with little satisfaction the reduction of expenditure which the noble lord holds out the hope of, and which is described in the following words:—'And trusts that such further diminution may be made therein as the future state of things may warrant.' What is the future state of things, and whoever heard of such language by a Minister of State?

I can only account for this resolution on the supposition that, like that unfortunate document, a Queen's Speech, it is the united composition of the whole cabinet. I say seriously to the House that when they are meeting to consider the condition of the country in consequence of the state of the finances — when the Prime Minister acknowledges that it is necessary that the House should come to some resolution, and that no one less than himself should propose it, that resolution ought to have some definite object. I do not say that it should be so precise as to tie down the minister, but, not treating the House like children, it should indicate some object and intimate some policy. In the present state of affairs the first duty of a ministry is to make such reductions as shall equalise our charges and our revenue, and as those reductions are effected to diminish the war taxation, which, used in a time of peace, is sapping and wasting that financial reserve which is the surest source of our influence with foreign nations and the best security for our prosperity at home. Under these circumstances, being forced to an opinion by the noble lord, who himself proposes this awkward and shambling vote of confidence in his own Government, we thought it very desirable that the objects which I have mentioned should be specifically indicated, and that a general policy should be defined. Therefore a resolution was prepared by my right honourable friend, who appears to have been appalled to-night by the address which has been made to him by the noble lord.

If our object were such as the noble lord supposes, if we were really intending an assault upon the Treasury bench, I do not suppose it would be

quite impossible to find another commander who would lead us in the attack. But our object was only to assert, at a moment of great perplexity in the House, a policy which we thought temperate and practicable, and which we believe the House must ultimately adopt, and public opinion sanction, without supposing that the noble lord would convert a proposal of that kind into a challenge to the Government of the country. I am not surprised, therefore, that my right honourable friend was shaken by the statement of the noble lord, which, although loudly supported by those about him, did not appear to me to recommend itself to the sense of propriety of the House generally. No doubt the statement has produced considerable effect, because if the noble lord really means to say that an attempt on the part of the House of Commons to make his resolution on finance intelligible is an effort to upset the Government, there is no doubt that it gives quite a new aspect to the proposal.

I cannot conceal from myself the alarming consequences which might attend even the candid observations of my right honourable friend on this subject. If I had any intention such as the noble lord supposes, I do not know that I should have asked my right honourable friend to move this resolution; but it appeared to me that the resolution, on the expediency of which the House was universally decided, ought to be one that should secure the good opinion of the country, or at least that respect which an intelligible purpose always commands.

I am not prepared to suggest any course which should effect that object. I see several amendments on the paper which are offered for the purpose of

attaining it. With most of them I am obliged for one reason or another to differ. There remained that of my right honourable friend, which I was disposed to prefer to them all. To-morrow I believe we shall all be engaged elsewhere.* I daresay that many honourable gentlemen who take more interest than I do in that noble pastime will have their favourites. I hope they will not be so unlucky as to find their favourites bolting. If any are placed in that dilemma, they will be better able to understand and sympathise with my feelings on this occasion. I was extremely anxious that this resolution should have been adopted by the House, and I confess I had not myself much doubt that the noble lord would have taken it. With this resolution we should have had something to guide us. We should have had a policy, temperately expressed, and only to be carried into effect if the circumstances of the country justified it.

I cannot doubt that if the resolution had been unanimously accepted by the House we should have had next year on those benches a Government, composed no matter of what materials — except, indeed, it were formed by the honourable member for Halifax, and then I am sure we should have perpetual war — who would have submitted the expenditure of the country to a severe revision, with a view to that retrenchment which is perfectly consistent with the efficiency of the public service.

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*The 'Derby' was to be run the next day, and the House was to stand adjourned, as usual, to the day after.

COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH ITALY, February 17, 1863.*

[This speech may be called the *locus classicus* of Mr. Disraeli's speeches on commercial treaties. The gist of it is that commercial treaties could do us very little good when, owing to our free-trade policy, we had nothing left to give in exchange.]

R. DISRAELI: Sir, it is, I think, very much to the credit of the Liberal party that we have at last heard from an honourable gentleman a free-trade speech. I shall not offer any observations in vindication of those rags and shreds of protection of which the House has just been reminded. I think our opinion on that subject has been expressed in a manner which cannot be mistaken. Our sincerity as to the course of policy which it has been the wisdom of the country to pursue has been proved by as great sacrifices as can be made by public men. But upon the other side of the House — where honourable members are, or are supposed to be, the advocates of free trade and Parliamentary Reform — I did not expect to have heard this discussion commenced by the Under

* This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

Secretary of Foreign Affairs making a personal and violent attack upon my honourable friend near me, on the ground that because he advocates the policy of commercial treaties he is showing himself to be a new convert to the principles of free trade.

Sir, I never heard that commercial treaties were connected with the abstract principle of a free exchange of commodities between nations. There is nothing very modern, I believe, in the invention of commercial treaties; nor am I aware that the Tory party have ever shown a disrelish to support commercial treaties, if commercial treaties are to be accepted, as we are told by a member of the Government, as a test of sincerity in the belief in the principle of free trade. Why, Sir, commercial treaties even with France, have been negotiated successfully by Tory ministers many years before the present commercial treaty with France. There was the commercial treaty of Mr. Pitt, which was only a reproduction of the treaty which Lord Bolingbroke, a Tory minister, negotiated successfully more than 150 years ago for the exchange of products between England and France on terms much easier than those that at present exist.

And why was that treaty negotiated, but not ratified? Why was it defeated? It was defeated through the opposition of the Whig party in this House. Mr. Addison, one of the most distinguished members that ever sat in this House, and who afterwards was Secretary of State, exerted all his wit and unrivalled powers of humour and composition in ridiculing the arrival of a distinguished foreigner in this country—one Count Tariffe, whose mission was to introduce the habit of free exchange of commodities between two great nations. Those powers of ridicule and hu-

mour, supported by the unfortunate prejudices of the country, defeated that treaty. Therefore, nothing can be more unfounded than to suppose that because we on this side of the House are in favour of commercial treaties we are in fact at all deserting those principles which have been habitually supported, I may almost say for centuries, by the Tory party. But the honourable Under Secretary of State attacks my friend, and says: 'Because you are a supporter of a commercial treaty I hold you up to public reprobation as only a recent convert to the principles of free trade.'

Now, Sir, if there can be anything opposed to the abstract principles of free exchange upon which unrestricted competition depends, it is, it must be, those regulations or conventions by which reciprocal advantages are sought in the commercial exchange of nations. You are departing from those principles which you take every opportunity of claiming as your own; you are departing from the ground of pure science and inexorable logic the moment you attempt to negotiate the terms upon which commercial exchange shall take place. Now, in the case of the French treaty we came forward with certain advantages which we proposed to exchange for others. That I thought myself at the time, generally speaking, to be a most wise policy. I thought, and always have thought, that anything which favoured commercial exchange between England and France was a policy which each country ought to favour, but the scheme was entirely contrary to those abstract principles of free exchange which you have always upheld.

Nothing, then, can be more inconsistent than to reproach any gentleman on this side because he supports commercial treaties. I remember, Sir, many

years ago, introducing the subject of commercial treaties to this House. It was before the honourable member for Rochdale, a gentleman who on all subjects shows great capacity, was one of its members. But having supported in that motion the system of commercial treaties, as one which I thought would, upon the whole, most promote the increase of the commerce of this country, I remember being attacked out of the House by the honourable member on that subject. I do not know whether the words were uttered aloud, so that we can find them in authentic record; but I can say from my own personal experience, that no less a personage than Sir Robert Peel said upon that occasion, 'Don't you think we have heard the last of commercial treaties?'

Well, Sir, we had not heard the last of commercial treaties. A very considerable commercial treaty was destined to be negotiated years after. So shrewd, so sagacious a statesman as Sir Robert Peel, so cautious in expressing his opinion, in 1844 probably was, then, of the belief that we had heard the last of commercial treaties. Yet we had not heard the last of commercial treaties. A most important commercial treaty was afterwards negotiated, and by whom? By the honourable gentleman the member for Rochdale (Mr. Cobden). Now, that is a lesson to all of us. It teaches us this—that, whatever the value or the truth of abstract principles, it is in their application—in the wise and necessary application of those principles, that is involved the prosperity of nations.

Now, Sir, I think we are very much indebted to my honourable friend for bringing this subject before us; not that I think the observations he has made to-night, or the interesting debate which has followed,

will at all advance in this country the question of commercial treaties. I think we have got into a position in which that is impracticable: but the discussion will at least teach the country the position which upon that subject it really occupies. We have no means of negotiation, and it is most unwise, in my opinion, to hold out generally to the country that the Government have the power of negotiating treaties of commercial advantage.

The country has accepted the policy of unrestricted competition. If it be dissatisfied with that policy, let it frankly announce its dissatisfaction. But we cannot have the advantage of a policy of unrestricted competition and at the same time, as regards commerce, enjoy the advantage of exchange under diplomatic arrangement — it is impossible at once to enjoy both. The country now wants to have the double advantage, but warning enough has been given. You have been told often and often by members of this House that whether it regards commerce, or whether it respects navigation, you were too liberal in parting with the advantages and privileges you possessed; but the principles of unrestricted competition were adopted, and it is now too late to inquire whether you were right or wrong. The policy which you then supported was accepted, and by that policy you must, in my opinion, stand. Why, in navigation alone, I remember how constantly you were told that you were needlessly giving up a thousand points. The constant answer was, 'Only make the surrender, only endure the sacrifice, and you will see that your example will inspire others.'

I am not aware myself of the satisfactory returns to which those sacrifices have tended. They appear

to me, as far as I can recall them at this moment, to be very slight and mean. But the policy was adopted after great discussion — after frequent appeals to the country — after great debate in this House, and great political consequences; and that you should now endeavour to combine the commercial advantages which accrue from unrestricted competition with the benefits which can only attend upon diplomatic arrangements, is a monstrous effort, which, depend upon it, must end in failure. It is not now for you to come forward — you who favour free trade and commercial treaties — and find fault with the Government because they cannot accomplish such results. You have yourselves resolved that the means which only can bring about these arrangements should be surrendered at discretion. You gave them up without condition, and it is impossible now to resume the position you have lost. But that is no reason whatever why the Government should attempt to carry on negotiations in this matter in the manner that the present Government does.

The Government know very well the position they occupy, and we are painfully conscious of it; and the Government, who are always better instructed than the House of Commons, must be doubly conscious of the difficulty of attempts to negotiate commercial treaties. The fault I find with the Government in pretending to negotiate commercial treaties is that they hold out an idea to the country that by an Italian or Austrian treaty they would create a great interchange. They know that it is impossible they can do it. It would be more dignified, to my mind, to hold aloof. Having adopted a commercial system the principle of which is unrestricted competition, it

would be more dignified, and I believe, in the end, more successful, if you held aloof rather than pretend you can negotiate these treaties.

Every day we hear, 'We have had a successful commercial treaty with France; why not with Italy—why not with Austria?' You know very well that you cannot have the same results as with France. You had something to give to France. You had the principle of reciprocity to act with, the principle which you have always despised and always condemned. That led to your success—that led to the results which have been obtained, and you claimed that as a discovery which was accomplished more than a century ago by some of the greatest statesmen that ever have existed in this country. It is past—the age of commercial treaties is past, because you have no means and no materials for negotiation. All you can do is to exercise that moral influence, of which we hear so much, with foreign countries with which you are placed in communication, to lead them by your own example and your own prosperity. Never mind whether it arose from your present or your old system of commerce—for the old as well as the present system of commerce has equally brought prosperity to this country—from the contemplation of that prosperity the conviction will grow in those countries that with immense resources they are producing small revenues; that they are not raising revenues that bear a due relation to their resources, and you may trust to that to lead to reciprocal exchanges and mutual benefits in commercial transactions. But you will gain that as completely, and perhaps sooner, without the embarrassment of commercial treaties than you would with these conventions.

I regret that, through the conduct of the Government and through the extraordinary behaviour of the free-trade party in patronising artificial agreements of exchange, there has arisen in this country the impression that the best and most politic mode of stimulating commerce is to have recourse to that method. That was a good theory twenty years ago, and not only a good theory, but a good theory which could be put in beneficial practice. I will not enter into a discussion now—at all times a barren controversy—whether if, twenty years ago, you had followed the principle of commercial exchange you would have derived more advantage than by suddenly adopting the principle of unrestricted competition. You have adopted unrestricted competition as the principle of your commercial code. By accident certain articles were excepted, and two years ago you used them as the means of negotiating a treaty of commerce with a great country, with a large population, and with very rich and valuable resources. You have played all your cards, and to attempt at the present moment to pretend that you can assist and support the commerce of this country by commercial treaties is a mere delusion.

No doubt the Government of this country may make use of its legitimate influence to obtain commercial advantages, but to obtain treaties on commercial and political principles are two different subjects; and my honourable friend is perfectly right in pointing out how important it is that the Government, when holding out the principle of commercial treaties as one highly advantageous to our allies, should not follow at the same time a general policy which irritates the feelings and offends the pride of foreign

Governments. In taking that line my honourable friend is highly to be commended, and no doubt what he has said will lead to suggestions in the public mind which will be advantageous. At the same time, I regret very much that honourable gentlemen opposite, after so many years, during which they have held with so much tenacity abstract opinions on commercial exchange, should now come forward and be agitating the country with the absolute necessity of making artificial arrangements for stimulating the commerce of the country. The plan which they seem now to foster is one not founded on right principles, and practically cannot be carried into effect; and any commercial treaties which England may now negotiate, and which when they are negotiated must be beneficial to the different countries concerned, no man can deny must be negotiated by political influence, and not by the influence of commercial considerations.

ON CALLING OUT RESERVE FORCES

April 8, 1878.

MESSAGE FROM THE QUEEN

[By the Treaty of San Stefano, concluded between Russia and Turkey in the spring of 1878, the latter Power was reduced to a cypher in the hands of Russia, and the position of England in the Mediterranean seriously imperilled. Russia was required by the British Government to submit the treaty to a Congress; and her refusal to do so was the signal for Lord Beaconsfield to advise Her Majesty to call out the Reserve Forces.]

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My lords, in moving an humble address to Her Majesty to thank the Queen for the gracious message which we have recently received from Her Majesty, I think it will not be considered unusual that I should make a few remarks on the circumstances in which that message has been addressed to Parliament. I assure your lordships I shall not ask you to follow me in a narrative of the war which has occurred between Russia and Turkey, or of the course which has been pursued by Her Majesty's Government during that war. When last I had the honour of addressing your lordships on

this subject, which was on the occasion of the meeting of Parliament, I said that during that war no noble lord opposite had challenged the policy which we had pursued, and I thought, therefore, I was entitled to assume that the policy on which we had acted had been generally approved, and I believe I may infer from what passed on that occasion that noble lords opposite assented to my statement. But it so happened that at almost the very moment I was then speaking circumstances were occurring which gave quite a new aspect to affairs, and I think that upon those circumstances and upon all the conduct of Her Majesty's Government subsequently to those circumstances your lordships have a legitimate, constitutional, and Parliamentary right to declare your opinion. With one exception, I will ask your attention only to what has occurred from the moment to which I have been alluding. My lords, before I enter into the details with which I shall have to trouble your lordships, I ask permission to read an extract from an important despatch, which extract it seems to me to be necessary you should have in your minds before you can form an impartial judgment on the statement which I am about to submit to your lordships' House. In that paper, which was an answer to Prince Gortschakoff announcing and vindicating the commencement of the war between Russia and Turkey, the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby) argued with great ability the many reasons why we could not agree with His Highness. Having given many reasons for this, the Secretary of State concluded:—

'The course on which the Russian Government has entered involves graver and more serious considerations.' (That is, graver and more serious than those which he had already alleged.) 'It is in con-

WAR

On the Dizzy Brink.

Lord B.: Just a little nearer the edge?

Britannia: Not an inch farther. I'm a good deal nearer than is pleasant already.

FROM A CARTOON IN THE LONDON *PUNCH* IN THE YEAR 1878.

(See page 114, *Selected Speeches.*)

WAR

travention of the stipulation of the Treaty of Paris of March 30, 1856, by which Russia and the other signatory Powers engaged, each on its own part, to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. In the Conference of London of 1871, at the close of which the above stipulation with others was again confirmed, the Russian plenipotentiary, in common with those of the other Powers, signed a declaration affirming it to be "an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting parties by means of an amicable arrangement." In taking action against Turkey on his own part, and having recourse to arms without further consultation with his allies, the Emperor of Russia has separated himself from the European concert hitherto maintained, and has at the same time departed from the rule to which he himself had solemnly recorded his consent.'

My lords, the reply from which I have read that extract is dated May 1, 1877; and it is of the greatest importance that the House should bear in mind that, at the commencement of the deplorable war which I trust has now ceased, this announcement was so deliberately made and this principle was vindicated in a manner so distinct by Her Majesty's Government. My lords, the extract which I have read conveys the keynote of our policy; it is the diapason of our diplomacy; upon it our policy was founded; and had not those engagements been entered into by Russia, and had we not held her bound by those engagements in the face of Europe, no policy of neutrality would have been sanctioned by this country. I believe, my lords, I may say that not alone for this, but for other countries which adopted the same policy.

Well, since I had the honour of addressing your lordships at the beginning of this session, circumstances which were just then occurring and which continued afterwards have given a new aspect to the state of affairs. Those circumstances were as follow:—About

that time Her Majesty's Government received private information that negotiations were commencing or were about to commence between the belligerent Powers. No sooner had that information reached us than the Secretary of State addressed to Her Majesty's ambassador at St. Petersburg, Lord A. Loftus, instructions which were as follows, and were dated January 14:

'Her Majesty's ambassador has been instructed to state to Prince Gortschakoff that, in order to avoid possible misconception and in view of reports which have reached Her Majesty's Government, they are of opinion that any treaty concluded between the Governments of Russia and the Porte affecting the treaties of 1856 and 1871 must be a European treaty, and would not be valid without the assent of the Powers who were parties to those treaties.'

My lords, on January 23, having received no answer from Russia with respect to those representations, the Secretary of State, pressing for an answer, telegraphed in these terms:—

'Have you received an answer from the Russian Government to the communication which you made on the 15th inst. respecting the validity of any future treaty?'

On January 24, ten days after the original representations, Her Majesty's ambassador writes to say he had received no answer himself, and adds:—

'I presume Prince Gortschakoff regarded the communication as a statement to record the opinion of Her Majesty's Government which required no answer. If an answer was to be given, it would probably be made through the Russian ambassador in London.'

Accordingly, my lords, on the day after that message was received, Count Schouvaloff read to my

noble friend the following extract of a telegram from Prince Gortschakoff:—

'We repeat the assurance that we do not intend to settle by ourselves (*insolément*) European questions having reference to the peace which is to be made (*se rattachant à la paix*).'

Meanwhile, my lords, information reached us that negotiations were now being carried on between Russian and Turkish delegates at Kezanlik, and that those negotiations were being conducted with the utmost secrecy, I may say, mystery, which secrecy was held as against those who had religiously and honourably observed that policy of neutrality which had been promised by the Secretary of State. In consequence of this, my lords, on January 29 the Secretary of State addressed the following despatch to Lord A. Loftus:—

'I have to instruct your Excellency to state to the Russian Government that Her Majesty's Government, while recognising any arrangements made by the Russian and Turkish delegates at Kezanlik for the conclusion of an armistice and for the settlement of bases of peace as binding between the two belligerents, declare that in so far as those arrangements are calculated to modify European treaties and to affect general and British interests they are unable to recognise in them any validity unless they are made the subject of a formal agreement among the parties to the Treaty of Paris.'

At the same time, my lords, the Secretary of State sent the following circular in identical language to Her Majesty's ambassadors at all the Courts of Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Rome. Your lordships will perceive that it contains an additional paragraph, but in other respects is substantially the same as the communication to Lord A. Loftus of January 29.

'I have to request that your Excellency will inform the Government to which you are accredited that Her Majesty's Government, while they are prepared to recognise any arrangements which may be made by the Russian delegates and those of Turkey at Kezanlik with a view to the conclusion of an armistice and the settlement of bases of peace as binding between the two belligerents, declare, nevertheless, that in so far as such arrangements may be found calculated to modify European treaties, or to affect general interests or those of Great Britain, they are unable to recognise in them any validity unless they shall be made the subject of a formal agreement by the Powers parties to the Treaty of Paris.

'Her Majesty's Government entertain the hope that the view of the case above stated, which is entirely based upon the treaties, and more especially upon the Treaty of London of 1871, will receive the assent of the other Powers who were parties to those treaties.'

At length, my lords, there came the following reply from the Russian Government:—

'St. Petersburg: January 30, 1878.

'I have received your lordship's telegram of yesterday, containing a declaration relative to the question of the validity of the bases of peace, and I have this morning communicated the substance of it to Prince Gortschakoff. His Highness replied that to effect an armistice certain bases of peace were necessary, but they are only to be considered as preliminaries, and not definitive as regarded Europe. His Highness stated categorically that questions bearing on European interests will be concerted with European Powers, and he had given Her Majesty's Government clear and positive assurances to this effect.'

Those positive assurances were repeated in communications made by the Russian ambassador to this country; and I am bound to say, as so many remarks have been made on the conduct of that plenipotentiary, that I believe he has made no representations to Her Majesty's Government which are not to be found in the instructions which he received from his own Government.

Well, my lords, this carried us through the month of January, the month in which Parliament assembled, the month in which those negotiations between Russia and Turkey commenced, and the month in which was received that declaration from Prince Gortschakoff which Her Majesty's Government was induced to regard as satisfactory. And that it was deemed satisfactory by the Government of Austria also I think there can be no doubt, because on February 4 a formal invitation was received by Her Majesty's Government from the Government of Austria to a Conference to be held at Vienna. That communication was made with the knowledge of Russia, or, to use the language of a despatch of the Austrian ambassador, Russia 'fully appreciated it,' and the object of the Conference was stated to be the establishment of 'a European agreement as to the modifications which it might become necessary to introduce in existing treaties,' in order to make them harmonise with the present situation. Your lordships will observe the character in which this Government, the Government of Austria, and the other Governments were to take part in the Conference. Avowedly, it was in her character as a signatory of the treaties of 1856 that Austria addressed the invitation to the other Powers, and it was in their character as signatories of those treaties that the other Powers received that invitation. That carried us to the commencement of February, and the month which follows is not rich in diplomatic documents. But, my lords, it was not an uneventful month. During the whole of that period Austria was busy in conferring with the different Courts of Europe and in making arrangements for the meeting of the Conference. There was the scheme

of its meetings at Vienna; there was the objection of some of the Powers to the meeting being held in a capital city. There were discussions as to the presidency, as to the locality, and as to the name of the assembly, as to whether it should be held in a capital city or in a place of more obscure character, as to whether it should be called a Conference or a Congress, and as to whether it should be presided over by a Secretary of State or by some other minister. All those questions occupied the minds of Governments, but they did not occupy the minds of Her Majesty's Government. Her Majesty's Government never made the slightest objection. There were persons proposed whom we might not have approved as the best president; there were localities proposed, which, perhaps, we did not approve as the best; but we never made any objection of the kind. We thought too much of the interests of peace and of the magnitude of the considerations involved in a meeting of a Conference or Congress; so that whether it was to be a Conference or a Congress, or whether it was to be held at Vienna, as originally proposed, or at Baden, or at Berlin, or who was to preside over it were matters which Her Majesty's Government put on one side, because we were anxious that there should be such a meeting, believing that by it a means of securing the peace of Europe might be obtained.

My lords, an invitation arrived from Austria to a Congress at Berlin, the objection to a capital city having, it appears, been waived. Well, we stated without a moment's delay that we would accept it, and we did not for a moment ask why Berlin should be preferred to Vienna. All we wanted was that

there should be such a meeting; but mindful as we were of the events which had been occurring during the month of February when Austria was carrying on those negotiations, remembering that during the whole of that time secret negotiations were being carried on between Russia and the Porte, remembering the fact that during the whole time while those secret negotiations were proceeding the Russian army was advancing, and, if not occupying, encircling the capital of Turkey, and remembering that we had felt it our duty to advise Her Majesty to send a portion of the fleet to the Dardanelles, we considered it was of importance when we assented to attending a Congress at Berlin that the policy of Her Majesty's Government should be stated in an unmistakable form, and the Secretary of State on March 4, while agreeing to that proposition, expressed to Count Beust the views of Her Majesty's Government in these terms:—

'Her Majesty's Government, however, consider that it would be desirable to have it understood in the first place that all questions dealt with in the treaty of peace between Russia and Turkey should be considered as subjects to be discussed in the Congress, and that no alteration in the condition of things previously established by treaty should be acknowledged as valid until it has received the assent of the Powers.'

I think, my lords, I have shown you that in the eventful month that elapsed from the time to which I before alluded, Her Majesty's Government were consistently maintaining that great principle which they had vindicated before the war commenced, which they had repeated on other occasions, and which on this occasion, when the meeting of the Congress appeared to be settled upon generally, they felt it their

duty to again affirm in the terms I have just read to the House. A day or two afterwards—in consequence, probably, of some rumours which may have reached us or of some slight indications of feeling which it was impossible to record, but which the observant critic would not fail to remark—the Secretary of State wrote in this language to Her Majesty's ambassador at Vienna:—

'I have to request your Excellency to inform Count Andrassy that, in order to avoid any misapprehension as to the meaning of their recent declaration contained in my note to Count Beust of the 9th inst., Her Majesty's Government desire to state that they must distinctly understand, before they enter into Congress, that every article in the treaty between Russia and Turkey will be placed before the Congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it may be considered what articles require acceptance or concurrence by the several Powers and what do not.'

Now, my lords, after some slight delay, we received a memorandum from Prince Gortschakoff which was communicated by Lord A. Loftus on March 17.

'In answer to the communication by Lord Augustus Loftus of the despatch in which Lord Derby has answered the proposal of Count Beust respecting the meeting of a Congress at Berlin, I have the honour to repeat the assurance which Count Schouvaloff has already been instructed to give to the Government of Her Britannic Majesty—namely, that the preliminary treaty of peace concluded between Russia and Turkey will be textually communicated to the Great Powers before the meeting of the Congress, and that in the Congress itself each Power will have the full liberty of its appreciations and of its action (*la pleine liberté de ses appréciations et de son action.*)

Now, my lords, I may not, perhaps, be an impartial judge, but I must say that the phrase *la pleine liberté de ses appréciations et de son action* was one

of which I was not able to form a very clear conception. As to what 'appreciation' and 'action' may be, no doubt different interpretations may be furnished. It is a phrase involved in some degree of classical ambiguity. Delphi itself could hardly have been more perplexing and august.

Well, my lords, Her Majesty's Government could place only one interpretation on that communication. However ambiguous the language of previous despatches, however various the expressions that had been used, there was nothing in the previous correspondence between the two Courts to induce us to assume that there would be a refusal on the part of Russia to that which England believed to be a natural, just, and indispensable condition of her entering into the Congress. We are to understand by implication that now for the first time there was ground for that assumption. My lords, let me make one or two remarks on the character of this treaty of San Stefano which Her Majesty's Government felt so necessary to be submitted to the Congress, and which we believed—and I think we believed so in common with the other powers—Russia was bound by the treaties of 1856 and 1871 to submit to the Congress.

The treaty is in your lordships' hands, and, therefore, I will not enter into a minute criticism of its every article; but it is necessary that I should put before your lordships some of its provisions, because, unless they be clear in your lordships' minds, you would hardly be in a position to impartially decide as to the consequences to which the treaty would lead, and as to the course which in respect of it Her Majesty's Government have thought it their duty to pursue.

The treaty is one of twenty-seven or twenty-nine articles, and, with the exception of a merely technical one, every one of them is a deviation from the articles of the treaties of 1856 and 1871. I do not say that every article of the Treaty of San Stefano would be a violation of the treaties of 1856 and 1871, because that would be a hard phrase. If the Government of Russia were prepared, as we believed they were prepared, to place the Treaty of San Stefano before the Congress, I should look at the deviations between the Treaty of San Stefano and the treaties of 1856 and 1871, not as violations, but rather as suggestions of the Russian Government to be laid before the Congress in order that they might be considered, and, if just, be adopted by the other Powers of Europe. But let us look at what this treaty does — this treaty which was negotiated in such secrecy and encircled in mystery to such a degree that the Porte was commanded by Russia not to let a single article of it be known to the neutral Powers, without whose neutrality she could not have gained the advantages she enjoyed, and which would not have been shown unless it had been believed that, as regarded the other Powers, Russia would feel bound by the treaties of 1856 and 1871. Well, my lords, the Treaty of San Stefano completely abrogates what is known as Turkey in Europe; it abolishes the dominion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe; it creates a large State which, under the name of Bulgaria, is inhabited by many races not Bulgarians. This Bulgaria goes to the shores of the Black Sea and seizes the ports of that sea; it extends to the coast of the Ægean and appropriates the ports of that coast. The treaty provides for the government of this new Bulgaria, under a prince who

is to be selected by Russia, its administration is to be organised and supervised by a commissary of Russia, and this new State is to be garrisoned, I say for an indefinite period, but at all events for two years certain, by Russia.

My lords, it is not merely this vast district, this vast space of country, which is taken from the Porte for which the power and the government of Russia is substituted by the stipulations in this treaty, but for the distant provinces of Bosnia, and Epirus, and Thessaly there are instituted new laws which are to be revised by Russia and afterwards supervised by Russia; so that we say all the European dominions of the Ottoman Porte are taken from the Porte and put under the administration of Russia. My lords, it is not difficult to see that the effect of all the stipulations combined, will be to make the Black Sea as much a Russian lake as the Caspian. The harbour of Batoum, which is still in possession of the Porte, is seized by Russia, all the strongholds in Armenia are seized by Russia, and the portion of that great province nominally left to Turkey, will be governed by law supervised by Russia. The next point which I feel it necessary to bring under the consideration of your lordships, is that of the claim of Russia to the district of Bessarabia, of which she was deprived after the Crimean War. My lords, I need not recall to your recollection the distressing circumstances which are now arriving and which have arrived with reference to that portion of the Treaty of San Stefano; but I want to point out to your lordships that here it is not a matter of trifling or local interest which is at stake. The clause in the Treaty of Paris with regard to the cession of Bessarabia was one on which Lord Palmerston placed

the utmost stress, and to which he attached the very greatest importance. It involved the emancipation of the Danube, and, accordingly, Lord Palmerston treated it as an article, not of local, but of European interest. It was inserted in the original preliminaries of the treaty, and an attempt was made by Russia to evade it; but Lord Palmerston attached such importance to it that the Congress of Paris was nearly breaking up because of the efforts made not to have that article carried into effect.

The great interest felt at the Congress of Paris in taking security against the closing of those seas and the closing of the Danube, is a matter which your lordships will bear in mind when examining the Treaty of San Stefano. The large European commerce which is now carried on from Trebizond to Russia and Central Asia may be stopped at the pleasure of Russia in consequence of cessions in Kurdistan. But what would be the consequence of the treaty if carried out with reference to the navigation of the Straits? By that treaty the Sultan of Turkey is reduced to a state of absolute subjugation to Russia, and, either as to the opening of the navigation of the Black Sea or as to all those rights and privileges with which the Sultan was invested as an independent sovereign, he would be no longer in the position in which he was placed by the European treaties. We therefore protest against an arrangement which practically would place at the command of Russia, and Russia alone, that unrivalled situation and its resources which the European Powers placed under the government of the Porte.

Now, my lords, this treaty was signed on March 3, but it was not delivered to Her Majesty's Govern-

ment till March 23. I do not say that during the interval we had not by extraordinary means obtained some knowledge of its provisions, but that was knowledge on which we could not absolutely rely; it was knowledge which, like all knowledge acquired in that way, was likely to be in some degree erroneous; but, at all events, it allowed us to avail ourselves of the earliest opportunity of endeavouring to avert what we conceived to be mischievous results to all Europe. My lords, we still hoped and still believed that a Congress might be obtained, and we looked to it as the only means by which the unsatisfactory state of public affairs might be remedied. We were prepared, if all the Powers entered into the Congress, and if it were a *bona fide* Congress, and in accordance with the positive engagements as we believed of Russia—we were prepared, I say, to see the Treaty of San Stefano submitted to discussion by that Congress in order that, to use the words of the Austrian Government, a *règlement définitif* of the conditions of future peace might be arrived at.

It appeared to us that the circumstances of the world were not unfavourable to that. All the Great Powers of Europe during the last ten years, except England, unfortunately for them, had been involved in fearful wars, and were suffering from the exhaustion attendant on such wars; and we believed that, with the general and natural inclination for peace arising from such circumstances, the discussions of a Congress, carried on as a European Congress would be, would prove favourable to a satisfactory solution of difficulties. And, my lords, we, as far as we were concerned, had a due consideration for the circumstances in which Russia was placed, in consequence

of the war between her and Turkey, because we could not expect that Russia would appear at the Congress merely in the same character as she assumed when she became a signatory to the treaties of 1856 and 1871. We were prepared to consider the events that had occurred; but, having regard to the temper with which we expected that the proposals of Russia would be considered, we believed that Russia would not disappoint the other Powers. We regarded it as being for her own advantage to comply with the engagements into which she had entered, and that, acting as she had agreed to act by the treaties of 1856 and 1871, she would have placed before the Congress the stipulations of all the articles of the treaty.

My lords, you have heard from me in my previous narrative how these hopes were disappointed. My lords, it was when these hopes were disappointed, and when we found there was no chance by the aid of treaties or by the public law of Europe to bring about a settlement of those great affairs, that we had to consider what was our duty. My lords, the Congress could not meet after that refusal on the part of Russia to conform to her engagements under previous treaties, and the conditions which England put forward when the Treaty of San Stefano was placed before the European Powers were conditions which she could never relinquish. The justice of them has been universally acknowledged. It is not denied even by Russia. What, then, was the state of affairs? No Congress was to meet, and a most important portion of Eastern Europe and a considerable portion of Western Asia were either occupied by an invading army or were in a state of actual rebellion. It was impossible

to say what might not occur in circumstances of such difficulty and distress. My lords, the country in which these events were occurring is a country which has always been subject to strange and startling vicissitudes. In the East there is only one step between collapse and convulsion, and it was possible that with the British fleet in the Dardanelles, the chief highway between Europe and Asia might be seized, and that the commercial road from Trebizond to Persia might be stopped.

We know that, if not in the memory of the present generation, certainly in the memory of some members of your lordships' House, armies marched through Syria and through Asia without firing a shot, and held Constantinople in a state of trepidation. Why not march armies in the same way and hold Egypt and the Suez Canal in the same state of trepidation as Constantinople and the Bosphorus was held at that time? In those circumstances, there was, in our opinion, only one course to take. When everything was unsettled; when there was no prospect of a settlement; when there seemed no probability of the Treaty of San Stefano being submitted for discussion to the European Powers, and of the public law being vindicated; when all Europe was armed, was England to be disarmed? Was England to be deterred from doing her duty to herself and to Europe by taunts and threats — because we were told that we were menacing when we thought to conciliate? My lords, our fleet, which has reached the waters of the Dardanelles, has acted in a manner worthy of it, and in the manner it might have been expected to act; but I have always thought that when it is found necessary to show our strength, certainly England should not be

limited to one of her services — that she should appeal to her military force to maintain her honour and her interests, as well as to her marine.

Well, my noble lords, in those circumstances we felt it our duty to advise Her Majesty to send the message to your lordships' House the answer to which I am about to propose. And here let me make one remark upon the act of the Sovereign in that particular. It is the first time the Sovereign of this country has sent down such a message to Parliament, because this message is in virtue of an Act of Parliament which was passed only a very few years ago. That act was in consequence of a great military reform, which was inaugurated by the last Government, and particularly by the noble viscount (Viscount Cardwell) opposite. My lords, that great military reform gave rise to much controversy and opposition in the country; but, as has been the case in respect of all great Acts of our legislature, when it became law every man on both sides exerted himself to carry it into effect. I am sure that during the experience of the present Government — and that has not been a short one — there has been an unceasing effort to carry into effect the measures and policy of the noble viscount opposite. I feel at liberty to speak on this point, because it is my lot to differ from many of my friends in this matter. The great principle which is the foundation of the reserve system — the principle of short service — is one which I have had the honour to support. Well, my lords, it is in consequence of that reform in our military system, and the institution of short service, that we are obliged to recommend Her Majesty to call out our reserves. Under the new military system it was laid down that

a battalion in time of war or on active service should consist of not less than 1,000 men. A battalion in time of peace consists of only 500 men, and therefore the machinery of reserves, the arrangement introduced by the noble lord opposite, that there should be with this short service a means by which when men passed through their short service and left their colours they might become, under another title, the soldiers of Her Majesty, was the only means by which you could convert our battalions of 500 men, in case of emergency, into battalions of 1,000 men, who should not be mere raw recruits.

Now, unfortunately, the name for this force is not a very felicitous one; it is called the Reserve Force, and it is called the Militia Reserve Force, and the world associates with the word 'reserves' some resource that is left to the last, that is only to be appealed to in great emergency, and is to be the ultimate means by which you can effect your purpose. But this is exactly the reverse of what the reserve force instituted by the noble lord opposite is. It is not the last resource, but it is the first resource under our system. At this moment you really cannot put a *corps d'armée* into the field in a manner which would satisfy the country, unless Her Majesty was advised that the circumstances justified such a message to the House from the Crown as I brought up the other day. Well, my lords, if it was necessary in this state of Europe that Her Majesty should have a sufficient naval and military force, we could take no step but that which we advised the Crown to adopt. And what was the consequence of this step? Her Majesty will be able in a very brief space of time to possess an army of 70,000 men fairly and even completely

disciplined. It is double the force of Englishmen that Marlborough or Wellington ever commanded; but it is not a force sufficient to carry on a great war. If England is involved in a great war our military resources are much more considerable than those you may put in motion by this statute; but it is the only way in which you can place at the disposal of the Crown a considerable and adequate force when the circumstances of the country indicate an emergency.

The noble lord the leader of the opposition the other night, in his lively and satisfactory answer to one of his own supporters, admitted and approved the satisfactory state in which the country was with regard to defence. He said:—'We happen to know from the Secretary of State that he has a *corps d'armée* ready, and that in a short time he can have another.' These make up the 70,000 men of whom I speak, and therefore the noble lord admitted it was not an unreasonable amount of force we were calling upon Parliament to grant. The question, therefore, between us and the noble lord is this—I will not say between the noble lord and us, but between us and any who differ from the policy of the Government in this respect—are the circumstances that exist in the East of Europe at this moment—do the circumstances that prevail in the Mediterranean constitute an emergency which justifies the demands that Her Majesty shall not only have a powerful navy in these waters, but shall command, if necessary, not a very considerable, but an adequate and an efficient army? Now, my lords, I would say that this is a question which comes home to every man's bosom. I cannot conceive myself that in the position in which this country now finds itself, when an immense revolution in

an important portion of the world has occurred — a revolution which involves the consideration of some of the most important interests of this country, and, I may say, even the freedom of Europe — I say I cannot conceive that any person who feels a sense of responsibility in the conduct of affairs could for a moment pretend that, when all are armed, England alone should be disarmed.

I am sure my noble friend,* whose loss I so much deplore, would never uphold that doctrine, or he would not have added the sanction of his authority to the meeting of Parliament and the appeal we made to Parliament immediately for funds adequate to the occasion of peril which we believed to exist. No, I do not think such things of him; and to the individual of whom I did I should say, *Naviget Anticyram;* only I trust, for heaven's sake, that his lunacy would not imperil the British Empire. I have ever considered that Her Majesty's Government, of whatever party formed, are the trustees of that Empire. That Empire was formed by the enterprise and energy of your ancestors, my lords; and it is one of a very peculiar character. I know no example of it, either in ancient or modern history. No Cæsar or Charlemagne ever presided over a dominion so peculiar. Its flag floats on many waters; it has provinces in every zone, they are inhabited by persons of different races, different religion, different laws, manners, customs. Some of these are bound to us by the ties of liberty, fully conscious that without their connection with the metropolis they have no security for public freedom and self-government;

* Lord Derby.

others are bound to us by flesh and blood and by material as well as moral considerations. There are millions who are bound to us by our military sway, and they bow to that sway because they know that they are indebted to it for order and justice. All these communities agree in recognising the commanding spirit of these islands that has formed and fashioned in such a manner so great a portion of the globe. My lords, that Empire is no mean heritage; but it is not a heritage that can only be enjoyed; it must be maintained, and it can only be maintained by the same qualities that created it — by courage, by discipline, by patience, by determination, and by a reverence for public law and respect for national rights. My lords, in the East of Europe at this moment some securities of that Empire are imperilled. I never can believe that at such a moment it is the Peers of England who will be wanting to uphold the cause of this country. I will not believe for a moment but that you will unanimously vote the address in answer to the message which I now move. The motion was as follows: —

'That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, thanking Her Majesty for her most gracious message, communicating to this House Her Majesty's intention to cause the Reserve Force and the Militia Reserve Force, or such part thereof as Her Majesty should think necessary, to be forthwith called out for permanent service.'

BERLIN TREATY.

Speech in House of Lords July 18, 1878, after the Return from Berlin.

[The calling out of the reserves in the month of April had been followed by the still more vigorous step of bringing up to Malta a division of our Indian army. The right of the Crown to employ Indian troops on this service had given rise to the most animated debates of the session in both Houses, in which, however, Lord Beaconsfield took only a subordinate part. But, right or wrong on constitutional grounds, the measure seems to have been eminently successful on diplomatic ones. Russia at once began to lower her pretensions, and agreed eventually to the demands of England that the Treaty of San Stefano should be entrusted to a European Congress. Early in June Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury went out as the English plenipotentiaries to the Congress of Berlin. They arrived in London on their return on July 15, and were greeted with an ovation which has not many parallels in our history. Three days afterwards Lord Beaconsfield delivered the following speech in the House of Lords, which was crowded before five o'clock to listen to the great orator and successful diplomatist. The galleries were thronged with princesses and peeresses, the Princess of Wales being among the number; and everything denoted a degree of interest and enthusiasm which neither the people nor the aristocracy of this country are in the habit of exhibiting. Lord Beaconsfield's contention was that by the Treaty of Berlin we had so modified the Treaty of San Stefano, concluded between Russia and Turkey under protest from this country, that we had restored the independence of the Turkish Empire. 'Turkey exists once more!' was the exclamation of Prince Bismarck when the line of the Balkans was secured for her. He further maintained that by the occupation of Cyprus and the superintendence of Asia Minor we had diminished, not increased, our responsibilities. We must, under any circumstances, have resisted a Russian invasion of Asia Minor; and by removing all pretext for such a movement we had in reality reduced the chance of being forced into hos-

tilities in future. Mr. Gladstone, three years afterwards, in paying a tribute to the memory of his deceased rival, singled out this moment as the culminating point of his greatness in the eyes of those who regarded his policy with admiration; and he applied to his Berlin triumph the well-known words of Virgil—

Aspice ut insignis spoliis Marcellus opimis,
Ingreditur, victorque viros surpereminet omnes.

His subsequent fortunes suggest to us the words of another Latin poet, who said that Marius would have been the greatest and most fortunate man whom either Rome or nature had produced if only his great soul had taken flight—

Quum de Teutonico vellet descendere curru.]

Y LORDS, in laying on the table of your lordships' House, as I am about to do, the protocols of the Congress of Berlin, I have thought I should be only doing my duty to your lordships' House, to Parliament generally, and to the country, if I made some remarks on the policy which was supported by the representatives of Her Majesty at the Congress, and which is embodied in the Treaty of Berlin and in the convention which was placed on your lordships' table during my absence.

My lords, you are aware that the Treaty of San Stefano was looked on with much distrust and alarm by Her Majesty's Government—that they believed it was calculated to bring about a state of affairs dangerous to European independence and injurious to the interests of the British Empire. Our impeachment of that policy is before your lordships

and the country, and is contained in the circular of my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in April last. Our present contention is, that we can show that, by the changes and modifications which have been made in the Treaty of San Stefano by the Congress of Berlin and the Convention of Constantinople, the menace to European independence has been removed, and the threatened injury to the British Empire has been averted. Your lordships will recollect that by the Treaty of San Stefano about one half of Turkey in Europe was formed into a State called Bulgaria—a State consisting of upwards of 50,000 geographical square miles, and containing a population of 4,000,000, with harbours on either sea—both on the shores of the Euxine and of the Archipelago. That disposition of Territory severed Constantinople and the limited district which was still spared to the possessors of that city—severed it from the provinces of Macedonia and Thrace by Bulgaria descending to the very shores of the Ægean; and, altogether, a State was formed, which, both from its natural resources and its peculiarly favourable geographical position, must necessarily have exercised a predominant influence over the political and commercial interests of that part of the world. The remaining portion of Turkey in Europe was reduced also to a considerable degree by affording what was called compensation to previous rebellious tributary principalities, which have now become independent States—so that the general result of the Treaty of San Stefano was, that while it spared the authority of the Sultan so far as his capital and its immediate vicinity, it reduced him to a state of subjection to the great Power which had defeated his armies, and which was pres-

ent at the gates of his capital. Accordingly, though it might be said that he still seemed to be invested with one of the highest functions of public duty — the protection and custody of the Straits — it was apparent that his authority in that respect could be exercised by him in deference only to the superior Power which had vanquished him, and to whom the proposed arrangements would have kept him in subjection.

My lords, in these matters the Congress of Berlin have made great changes. They have restored to the Sultan two-thirds of the territory which was to have formed the great Bulgarian State. They have restored to him upwards of 30,000 geographical square miles, and 2,500,000 of population — that territory being the richest in the Balkans, where most of the land is rich, and the population one of the wealthiest, most ingenious, and most loyal of his subjects. The frontiers of his State have been pushed forward from the mere environs of Salonica and Adrianople to the lines of the Balkans and Trajan's pass; the new principality, which was to exercise such an influence, and produce a revolution in the disposition of the territory and policy of that part of the globe, is now merely a State in the Valley of the Danube, and both in its extent and its population is reduced to one-third of what was contemplated by the Treaty of San Stefano. My lords, it has been said that while the Congress of Berlin decided upon a policy so bold as that of declaring the range of the Balkans as the frontier of what may now be called New Turkey, they have, in fact, furnished it with a frontier which, instead of being impregnable, is in some parts undefended, and is altogether one of an inadequate character.

My lords, it is very difficult to decide, so far as nature is concerned, whether any combination of circumstances can ever be brought about which would furnish what is called an impregnable frontier. Whether it be river, desert, or mountainous range, it will be found, in the long run, that the impregnability of a frontier must be supplied by the vital spirit of man; and that it is by the courage, discipline, patriotism, and devotion of a population that impregnable frontiers can alone be formed. And, my lords, when I remember what race of men it was that created and defended Plevna, I must confess my confidence that, if the cause be a good one, they will not easily find that the frontier of the Balkans is indefensible. But it is said that although the Congress has furnished — and it pretended to furnish nothing more — a competent military frontier to Turkey, the disposition was so ill-managed, that, at the same time, it failed to secure an effective barrier — that in devising the frontier, it so arranged matters that this very line of the Balkans may be turned. The Congress has been charged with having committed one of the greatest blunders that could possibly have been accomplished by leaving Sofia in the possession of a Power really independent of Turkey, and one which, in the course of time, might become hostile to Turkey. My lords, this is, in my opinion, an error on the part of those who furnish information of an authentic character to the different populations of Europe, who naturally desire to have correct information on such matters.

It is said that the position of Sofia is of a commanding character, and that of its value the Congress were not aware, and that it was yielded to an imperious demand on the part of one of the Powers

represented at the Congress. My lords, I can assure your lordships that there is not a shadow of truth in the statement. I shall show that when the Congress resolved to establish the line of the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey, they felt that there would have been no difficulty, as a matter of course, in Turkey retaining possession of Sofia. What happened was this. The highest military authority of the Turks — so I think I may describe him — was one of the plenipotentiaries at the Congress of the Porte — I allude to Mehemet Ali Pasha. Well, the moment the line of the Balkans was spoken of, he brought under the notice of his colleagues at the Conference — and especially, I may say, of the plenipotentiaries of England — his views on the subject, and, speaking as he did not only with military authority, but also with consummate acquaintance with all those localities, he said nothing could be more erroneous than the idea that Sofia was a strong strategic position, and that those who possessed it would immediately turn the Balkans and march on Constantinople. He said that as a strategical position it was worthless, but that there was a position in the Sandjak of Sofia which, if properly defended, might be regarded as impregnable, and that was the pass of Ichtiman. He thought it of vital importance to the Sultan that that position should be secured to Turkey, as then His Majesty would have an efficient defence to his capital.

That position was secured. It is a pass which, if properly defended, will prevent any host, however powerful, from taking Constantinople by turning the Balkans. But, in consequence of that arrangement, it became the duty of the plenipotentiaries to see what would be the best arrangement in regard of Sofia and

its immediate districts. The population of Sofia and its district are, I believe, without exception, Bulgarian, and it was thought wise, they being Bulgarians, that if possible it should be included in Bulgaria. That was accomplished by exchanging it for a district in which the population, if not exclusively, are numerically Mahometan, and which, so far as the fertility of the land is concerned, is an exchange highly to the advantage of the Porte. That, my lords, is a short account of an arrangement which I know has for a month past given rise in Europe, and especially in this country, to a belief that it was in deference to Russia that Sofia was not retained, and that by its not having been retained Turkey had lost the means of defending herself, in the event of her being again plunged into war.

My lords, it has also been said, with regard to the line of the Balkans, that it was not merely in respect of the possession of Sofia that an error was committed, but that the Congress made a great mistake in not retaining Varna. My lords, I know that there are in this assembly many members who have recollections — glorious recollections — of that locality. They will know at once that if the line of the Balkans were established as the frontier, it would be impossible to include Varna, which is to the north of the Balkans. Varna itself is not a place of importance, and only became so in connection with a system of fortifications, which are now to be rased. No doubt, in connection with a line of strongholds, Varna formed a part of a system of defence; but of itself Varna is not a place of importance. Of itself, it is only a roadstead, and those who dwell upon the importance of Varna, and consider that it was a great

error on the part of the Congress not to have secured it for Turkey, quite forget that between the Bosphorus and Varna, upon the coast of the Black Sea, the Congress has allotted to Turkey a much more important point on the Black Sea—the harbour of Burgos. My lords, I think I have shown that the charges made against the Congress on these three grounds—the frontiers of the Balkans, the non-retention of Sofia, and the giving up of Varna—have no foundation whatever.

Well, my lords, having established the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey in Europe, the Congress resolved that south of the Balkans, to a certain extent, the country should be formed into a province, to which should be given the name of Eastern Roumelia. At one time it was proposed by some to call it South Bulgaria; but it was manifest that with such a name between it and North Bulgaria there would be constant intriguing to bring about a union between the two provinces. We therefore thought that the province of East Roumelia should be formed, and that there should be established in it a Government somewhat different from that of contiguous provinces where the authority of the Sultan might be more unlimited. I am not myself of opinion that, as a general rule, it is wise to interfere with a military Power which you acknowledge; but though it might have been erroneous as a political principle to limit the military authority of the Sultan, yet there are in this world other things besides political principles; there are such things as historical facts; and he would not be a prudent statesman who did not take into consideration historical facts as well as political principles. The province which we have

formed into Eastern Roumelia had been the scene of many excesses, by parties on both sides, to which human nature looks with deep regret; and it was thought advisable, in making these arrangements for the peace of Europe, that we should take steps to prevent the probable recurrence of such events. Yet to do this and not give the Sultan a direct military authority in the province would have been, in our opinion, a grievous error. We have therefore decided that the Sultan should have the power to defend the barrier of the Balkans with all his available force. He has power to defend his frontiers by land and by sea, both by the passes of the mountains and the ports and strongholds of the Black Sea. No limit has been placed on the amount of force he may bring to bear with that object. No one can dictate to him what the amount of that force shall be; but, in respect to the interior and internal government of the province, we thought the time had arrived when we should endeavour to carry into effect some of those important proposals intended for the better administration of the States of the Sultan, which were discussed and projected at the Conference of Constantinople.

My lords, I will not enter into any minute details on these questions; they might weary you at this moment, and I have several other matters on which I must yet touch; but, generally speaking, I imagine there are three great points which we shall have before us in any attempt to improve the administration of Turkish dominion. First of all—it is most important, and we have so established it in Eastern Roumelia—that the office of Governor shall be for a specific period, and that, as in India, it should not

be for less than five years. If that system generally obtained in the dominions of the Sultan, I believe it would be of incalculable benefit. Secondly, we thought it desirable that there should be instituted public assemblies, in which the popular element should be adequately represented, and that the business of those assemblies should be to levy and administer the local finances of the province. And thirdly, we thought it equally important that order should be maintained in this province, either by a *gendarmerie* of adequate force or by a local militia, in both cases the officers holding their commission from the Sultan. But the whole subject of the administration of Eastern Roumelia has been referred to an Imperial Commission at Constantinople, and this commission, after making its investigations, will submit recommendations to the Sultan, who will issue firmans to carry those recommendations into effect. I may mention here, as it may save time, that in all the arrangements which have been made to improve the condition of the subject-races of Turkey in Europe, inquiry by local commissions where investigation may be necessary is contemplated. Those commissions are to report their results to the chief commission; and, after the firman of the Sultan has been issued, the changes will take place. It is supposed that in the course of three months from the time of the ratification of the Treaty of Berlin the principal arrangements may be effected.

My lords, I may now state what has been effected by the Congress in respect of Bosnia — that being a point on which, I think, considerable error prevails. One of the most difficult matters we had to encounter in attempting what was the object of the Congress of

Berlin — namely, to re-establish the Sultan as a real and substantial authority — was the condition of some of his distant provinces, and especially of Bosnia. The state of Bosnia, and of those provinces and principalities contiguous to it, was one of chronic anarchy. There is no language which can describe adequately the condition of that large portion of the Balkan peninsula occupied by Roumania, Servia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and other provinces. Political intrigues, constant rivalries, a total absence of all public spirit, and of the pursuit of objects which patriotic minds would wish to accomplish, the hatred of races, the animosities of rival religions, and, above all, the absence of any controlling power that could keep these large districts in anything like order: such were the sad truths, which no one who has investigated the subject could resist for a moment. Hitherto, at least until within the last two years, Turkey had some semblance of authority which, though it was rarely adequate, and when adequate, was unwisely exercised, still was an authority to which the injured could appeal, and which sometimes might control violence. But the Turkey of the present time was in no condition to exercise that authority. I inquired into the matter of those most competent to give an opinion, and the result of my investigation was a conviction that nothing short of an army of 50,000 men of the best troops of Turkey would produce anything like order in those parts, and that, were the attempt to be made, it would be contested and resisted, and might finally be defeated.

But what was to be said at a time when all the statesmen of Europe were attempting to concentrate and condense the resources of the Porte with the

view of strengthening them — what would have been the position of the Porte if it had to commence its new career — a career, it is to be hoped, of amelioration and tranquillity — by despatching a large army to Bosnia to deal with those elements of difficulty and danger? It is quite clear, my lords, that such an effort at this moment by Turkey might bring about its absolute ruin. Then what was to be done? There have been before, in the history of diplomacy, not unfrequent instances in which, even in civilised parts of the globe, States having fallen into decrepitude, have afforded no assistance to keep order and tranquillity, and have become, as these districts have become, a source of danger to their neighbours. Under such circumstances, the Powers of Europe have generally looked to see whether there was any neighbouring Power of a character entirely different from those disturbed and desolated regions, but deeply interested in their welfare and prosperity, who would undertake the task of attempting to restore their tranquillity and prosperity.

In the present case you will see that the position of Austria is one that clearly indicates her as fitted to undertake such an office. It is not the first time that Austria has occupied provinces at the request of Europe to ensure that order and tranquillity, which are European interests, might prevail in them. Not once, twice, or thrice has Austria undertaken such an office. There may be differences of opinion as to the policy on which Austria has acted, or as to the principles of government which she has maintained; but that has nothing to do with the fact that, under circumstances similar to those I have described as existing in Bosnia and the provinces contiguous to it, Austria has been

invited and has interfered in the manner I have described, and has brought about order and tranquillity. Austria in the present case was deeply interested that some arrangement should be made. Austria, for now nearly three years, has had upwards of 15,000 refugees from Bosnia, which have been supported by her resources, and whose demands notoriously have been of a vexatious and exhausting character. It was therefore thought expedient by the Congress that Austria should be invited to occupy Bosnia, and not to leave it until she had deeply laid the foundations of tranquillity and order. My lords, I am the last man who would wish, when objections are made to our proceedings, to veil them under the decision of the Congress; it was a decision which the plenipotentiaries of England highly approved. It was a proposal which, as your lordships will see when you refer to the protocols which I shall lay on the table, was made by my noble friend the Secretary of State, that Austria should accept this trust and fulfil this duty; and I earnestly supported him on that occasion.

My lords, in consequence of that arrangement cries have been raised against our 'partition of Turkey.' My lords, our object has been directly the reverse, our object has been to prevent partition. The question of partition is one upon which, it appears to me, very erroneous ideas are in circulation. Some two years ago—before, I think, the war had commenced, but when the disquietude and dangers of the situation were very generally felt—there was a school of statesmen who were highly in favour of what they believed to be the only remedy, what they called the partition of Turkey. Those who did not agree with them were those who thought we should, on the

whole, attempt the restoration of Turkey. Her Majesty's Government at all times have resisted the partition of Turkey. They have done so because, exclusive of the high moral considerations that are mixed up with the subject, they believed an attempt, on a great scale, to accomplish the partition of Turkey, would inevitably lead to a long, a sanguinary, and often recurring struggle, and that Europe and Asia would both be involved in a series of troubles and sources of disaster and danger of which no adequate idea could be formed.

These professors of partition — quite secure, no doubt, in their own views — have freely spoken to us on this subject. We have been taken up to a high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the earth, and they have said, 'All these shall be yours if you will worship Partition.' But we have declined to do so for the reasons I have shortly given. And it is a remarkable circumstance that after the great war, and after the prolonged diplomatic negotiations, which lasted during nearly a period of three years, on this matter, the whole Powers of Europe, including Russia, have strictly, and as completely as ever, come to the unanimous conclusion that the best chance for the tranquillity and order of the world is to retain the Sultan as part of the acknowledged political system of Europe. My lords, unquestionably after a great war — and I call the late war a great war, because the greatness of a war now must not be calculated by its duration, but by the amount of the forces brought into the field, and where a million of men have struggled for supremacy, as has been the case recently, I call that a great war — but, I say, after a great war like this, it is utterly impossible that you can have a

settlement of any permanent character without a redistribution of territory and considerable changes. But that is not partition. My lords, a country may have lost provinces, but that is not partition. We know that not very long ago a great country—one of the foremost countries of the world—lost provinces; yet is not France one of the great Powers of the world, and with a future—a commanding future?

Austria herself has lost provinces—more provinces even than Turkey, perhaps; even England has lost provinces—the most precious possessions—the loss of which every Englishman must deplore to this moment. We lost them from bad government. Had the principles which now obtain between the metropolis and her dependencies prevailed then, we should not, perhaps, have lost those provinces, and the power of this Empire would have been proportionally increased. It is perfectly true that the Sultan of Turkey has lost provinces; it is true that his armies have been defeated; it is true that his enemy is even now at his gates; but all that has happened to other Powers. But a sovereign who has not yet forfeited his capital, whose capital has not yet been occupied by his enemy—and that capital one of the strongest in the world—who has armies and fleets at his disposal, and who still rules over 20,000,000 of inhabitants, cannot be described as a Power whose dominions have been partitioned. My lords, it has been said that no limit has been fixed to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria. Well, I think that was a very wise step. The moment you limit an occupation you deprive it of half its virtue. All those opposed to the principles which occupation was devised to foster and strengthen, feel that they have only to hold their breath and wait

a certain time, and the opportunity for their interference would again present itself. Therefore, I cannot agree with the objection which is made to the arrangement with regard to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria on the question of its duration.

My lords, there is a point on which I feel it now my duty to trouble your lordships, and that is the question of Greece. A severe charge has been made against the Congress, and particularly against the English plenipotentiaries, for not having sufficiently attended to the interests and claims of Greece. My lords, I think you will find, on reflection, that that charge is utterly unfounded. The English Government were the first that expressed the desire that Greece should be heard at the Congress. But, while they expressed that desire, they communicated confidentially to Greece that it must on no account associate that desire on the part of the Government with any engagement for the redistribution of territory. That was repeated, and not merely once repeated. The Greek inhabitants, apart from the kingdom of Greece, are a considerable element in the Turkish Empire, and it is of the greatest importance that their interests should be sedulously attended to. One of the many evils of that large Slav State — the Bulgaria of the San Stefano treaty — was, that it would have absorbed, and made utterly to disappear from the earth, a considerable Greek population. At the Congress the Greeks were heard, and they were heard by representatives of considerable eloquence and ability; but it was quite clear, the moment they put their case before the Congress, that they had totally misapprehended the reason why the Congress had met together, and what were its objects and character.

The Greek representatives, evidently, had not in any way relinquished what they call their great idea — and your lordships well know that it is one which has no limit which does not reach as far as Constantinople. But they did mention at the Congress, as a practical people, and feeling that they had no chance of obtaining at that moment all they desired — that they were willing to accept as an instalment the two large provinces of Epirus and Thessaly, and the island of Crete. It was quite evident to the Congress, that the representatives of Greece utterly misunderstood the objects of our labours; that we were not there to partition Turkey, and give them their share of Turkey, but for a very contrary purpose; as far as we could, to re-establish the dominion of the Sultan on a rational basis, to condense and concentrate his authority, and to take the opportunity — of which we have largely availed ourselves — of improving the condition of his subjects.

I trust, therefore, when I have pointed out to your lordships this cardinal error in the views of Greece, that your lordships will feel that the charge made against the Congress has no substantial foundation. But the interests of Greece were not neglected, and least of all by Her Majesty's Government. Before the Congress of Berlin, believing that there was an opportunity of which considerable advantage might be made for Greece without deviating into partition, we applied to the Porte to consider the long-vexed question of the boundaries of the two States. The boundaries of Greece have always been inadequate and inconvenient; they are so formed as to offer a premium to brigandage — which is a curse of both countries, and has led to misunderstanding and violent

intercourse between the inhabitants of both. Now, when some redistribution — and a considerable redistribution — of territories was about to take place, now, we thought, was the opportunity for Greece to urge her claim; and that claim we were ready to support; and to reconcile the Porte to viewing it in a large and liberal manner. And I am bound to say that the manner in which our overtures were received by the Porte was encouraging, and more than encouraging. For a long period Her Majesty's Government have urged upon both countries, and especially upon Greece, the advantage of a good understanding between them. We urged that it was only by union between Turks and Greeks that any reaction could be obtained against that overpowering Slav interest which was then exercising such power in the Peninsula, and which had led to this fatal and disastrous war. More than this, on more than one occasion — I may say, on many occasions — we have been the means of preventing serious misunderstandings between Turkey and Greece, and on every occasion we have received from both States an acknowledgment of our good offices.

We were, therefore, in a position to assist Greece in this matter. But, of course, to give satisfaction to a State which coveted Constantinople for its capital, and which talked of accepting large provinces and a powerful island as only an instalment of its claims for the moment, was difficult. It was difficult to get the views of that Government accepted by Turkey, however inclined it might be to consider a reconstruction of frontiers on a large and liberal scale. My noble friend the Secretary of State did use all his influence, and the result was that, in my opinion, Greece has obtained a considerable accession of re-

sources and strength. But we did not find on the part of the representatives of Greece that response or that sympathy which we should have desired. Their minds were in another quarter. But though the Congress could not meet such extravagant and inconsistent views as those urged by Greece — views which were not in any way within the scope of the Congress or the area of its duty — we have still, as will be found in the treaty, or certainly in the protocol, indicated what we believe to be a rectification of frontier, which would add considerably to the strength and resources of Greece. Therefore, I think, under all the circumstances, it will be acknowledged that Greece has not been neglected. Greece is a country so interesting, that it enlists the sympathies of all educated men. Greece has a future, and I would say, if I might be permitted, to Greece, what I would say to an individual who has a future — 'Learn to be patient'.

Now, my lords, I have touched upon most of the points connected with Turkey in Europe. My summary is that at this moment — of course, no longer counting Servia or Roumania, once tributary principalities, as part of Turkey; not counting even the New Bulgaria, though it is a tributary principality, as part of Turkey; and that I may not be taunted with taking an element which I am hardly entitled to place in the calculation, omitting even Bosnia — European Turkey still remains a dominion of 60,000 geographical square miles, with a population of 6,000,000, and that population in a very great degree concentrated and condensed in the provinces contiguous to the capital. My lords, it was said, when the line of the Balkans was carried — and it was not carried until after long and agitating discussions — it was said by

that illustrious statesman who presided over our labours, that Turkey in Europe once more exists. My lords, I do not think that, so far as European Turkey is concerned, this country has any right to complain of the decisions of the Congress, or I would hope, of the labours of the plenipotentiaries. You cannot look at the map of Turkey as it had been left by the Treaty of San Stefano, and as it has been rearranged by the Treaty of Berlin, without seeing that great results have accrued. If these results had been the consequences of a long war—if they had been the results of a struggle like that we underwent in the Crimea—I do not think they would have been even then unsubstantial or unsatisfactory. My lords, I hope that you and the country will not forget that these results have been obtained without shedding the blood of a single Englishman; and if there has been some expenditure, it has been an expenditure which, at least, has shown the resources and determination of this country. Had you entered into that war—for which you were prepared—and well prepared—probably in a month you would have exceeded the whole expenditure you have now incurred.

My lords, I now ask you for a short time to quit Europe and to visit Asia, and consider the labours of the Congress in another quarter of the world. My lords, you well know that the Russian arms met with great success in Asia, and that in the Treaty of San Stefano considerable territories were yielded by Turkey to Russia. In point of population they may not appear to be of that importance that they are generally considered; because it is a fact which should be borne in mind that the population which was yielded to Russia by Turkey amounted only to about

250,000 souls; and, therefore, if you look to the question of population, and to the increase of strength in a State which depends on population, you would hardly believe that the acquisition of 250,000 new subjects is a sufficient return for the terrible military losses which inevitably must accrue from campaigns in that country. But although the amount of population was not considerable, the strength which the Russians acquired was of a very different character. They obtained Kars by conquest—they obtained Ardahan—another stronghold—they obtained Bayazid—and the Valley of Alashkerd with the adjoining territory, which contain the great commercial routes in that part of the world. They also obtained the port of Batoum.

Now, my lords, the Congress of Berlin have so far sanctioned the Treaty of San Stefano that, with the exception of Bayazid and the valley I have mentioned—no doubt very important exceptions, and which were yielded by Russia to the views of the Congress—they have consented to the yielding of the places I have named to Russia. The Congress have so far approved the Treaty of San Stefano that they have sanctioned the retention by Russia of Kars and Batoum. Now the question arises—the Congress having come to that determination: Was it a wise step on the part of the plenipotentiaries of Her Majesty to agree to that decision? That is a question which may legitimately be asked. We might have broken up the Congress and said, 'We will not consent to the retention of these places by Russia, and we will use our force to oblige her to yield them up.' Now, my lords, I wish fairly to consider what was our position in this state of affairs. It is often argued as if

Russia and England had been at war, and peace was negotiating between the two Powers. That was not the case. The rest of Europe were critics over a treaty which was a real treaty that existed between Russia and Turkey. Turkey had given up Batoum, she had given up Kars and Ardahan, she had given up Bayazid.

In an examination of the question, then, we must remember that Russia at this moment, so far as Europe is concerned, has acquired in Europe nothing but a very small portion of territory, occupied by 130,000 inhabitants. Well, she naturally expected to find some reward in her conquests in Armenia for the sacrifices which she had made. Well, my lords, consider what those conquests are. There was the strong fort of Kars. We might have gone to war with Russia in order to prevent her acquiring Kars and Batoum, and other places of less importance. The war would not have been, probably, a very short war. It would have been a very expensive war—and, like most wars, it would probably have ended in some compromise, and we should have got only half what we had struggled for. Let us look these two considerable points fairly in the face. Let us first of all take the great stronghold of Kars. Three times has Russia captured Kars. Three times, either by our influence or by other influences, it has been restored to Turkey. Were we to go to war for Kars and restore it to Turkey, and then to wait till the next misunderstanding between Russia and Turkey, when Kars should have been taken again? Was that an occasion of a *casus belli?* I do not think your lordships would ever sanction a war carried on for such an object and under such circumstances.

Then, my lords, look at the case of Batoum, of which your lordships have heard so much. I should have been very glad if Batoum had remained in the possession of the Turks, on the general principle that the less we had reduced its territory in that particular portion of the globe, the better it would be as regards the prestige on which the influence of the Ottoman Porte much depends there. But let us see what is this Batoum of which you have have heard so much. It is generally spoken of in society and in the world as if it were a sort of Portsmouth — whereas, in reality, it should rather be compared with Cowes. It will hold three considerable ships, and if it were packed like the London docks, it might hold six; but in that case the danger, if the wind blew from the north, would be immense. You cannot increase the port seaward; for though the water touching the shore is not absolutely fathomless, it is extremely deep, and you cannot make any artificial harbour or breakwater. Unquestionably, in the interior the port might be increased, but it can only be increased by first-rate engineers, and the expenditure of millions of capital; and if we were to calculate the completion of the port by the precedents which exist in many countries, and certainly in the Black Sea, it would not be completed under half a century. Now is that a question for which England would be justified in going to war with Russia? My lords, we have, therefore, thought it advisable not to grudge Russia those conquests which have been made — especially after obtaining the restoration of the town of Bayazid and its important district.

But it seemed to us the time had come when we ought to consider whether certain efforts should not

be made to put an end to these perpetually recurring wars between the Porte and Russia, ending, it may be, sometimes apparently in comparatively insignificant results; but always terminating with one fatal consequence—namely, shaking to the centre the influence and the prestige of the Porte in Asia, and diminishing its means of profitably and advantageously governing that country. My lords, it seemed to us that as we had now taken, and as Europe generally had taken, so avowedly deep an interest in the welfare of the subjects of the Porte in Europe, the time had come when we ought to consider whether we could not do something which would improve the general condition of the dominions of the Sultan in Asia; and, instead of these most favoured portions of the globe every year being in a more forlorn and disadvantageous position, whether it would not be possible to take some steps which would secure at least tranquillity and order; and, when tranquillity and order were secured, whether some opportunity might not be given to Europe to develop the resources of a country which Nature has made so rich and teeming.

My lords, we occupy with respect to this part of the world a peculiar position, which is shared by no other Power. Our Indian Empire is on every occasion on which these discussions occur, or these troubles occur, or these settlements occur—our Indian Empire is to England a source of grave anxiety, and the time appeared to have arrived when, if possible, we should terminate that anxiety. In all the questions connected with European Turkey we have had the assistance and sympathy sometimes of all, and often of many, of the European Powers—because they were interested in the question who should possess Constantinople, and

who should have the command of the Danube and the freedom of the Mediterranean. But when we come to considerations connected with our Oriental Empire itself, they naturally are not so generally interested as they are in those which relate to the European portion of the dominions of the Porte, and we have to look to our own resources alone. There has been no want, on our part, of invitations to neutral Powers to join with us in preventing or in arresting war. Besides the great Treaty of Paris, there was the tripartite treaty,* which, if acted upon, would have prevented war. But that treaty could not be acted upon, from the unwillingness of the parties to it to act; and therefore we must clearly perceive that if anything could be effectually arranged, as far as our Oriental Empire is concerned, the arrangements must be made by ourselves. Now, this was the origin of that Convention at Constantinople which is on your lordships' table, and in that Convention our object was not merely a military or chiefly a military object. Our object was to place this country certainly in a position in which its advice and in which its conduct might at least have the advantage of being connected with a military power and with that force which it is necessary to possess often in great transactions, though fortunately you may not feel that it is necessary to have recourse to that force.

Our object in entering into that arrangement with Turkey was, as I said before, to produce tranquillity and order. When tranquillity and order were produced, we believed that the time would come when

* April 29, 1856, between England, France, and Austria, guaranteeing the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

the energy and enterprise of Europe might be invited to what really is another continent, as far as the experience of man is concerned, and that its development will add greatly not merely to the wealth and the prosperity of the inhabitants, but to the wealth and prosperity of Europe. My lords, I am surprised to hear—for though I have not heard it myself from any authority, it is so generally in men's mouths that I am bound to notice it—that the step we have taken should be represented as one that is calculated to excite the suspicion or enmity of any of our allies, or of any State. My lords, I am convinced that when a little time has elapsed, and when people are better acquainted with this subject than they are at present, no one will accuse England of having acted in this matter but with frankness and consideration for other Powers. And if there be a Power in existence to which we have endeavoured to show most consideration from particular circumstances in this matter it is France. There is no step of this kind that I would take without considering the effect it might have upon the feelings of France—a nation to whom we are bound by almost every tie that can unite a people, and with whom our intimacy is daily increasing. If there could be any step which of all others was least calculated to excite the suspicion of France, it would appear to be this—because we avoided Egypt, knowing how susceptible France is with regard to Egypt; we avoided Syria, knowing how susceptible France is on the subject of Syria; and we avoided availing ourselves of any part of the *terra firma*, because we would not hurt the feelings or excite the suspicions of France. France knows that for the last two or three years we have listened to no appeal which in-

volved anything like an acquisition of territory, because the territory which might have come to us would have been territory which France would see in our hands with suspicion and dislike.

But I must make this observation to your lordships. We have a substantial interest in the East; it is a commanding interest, and its behest must be obeyed. But the interest of France in Egypt, and her interest in Syria, are, as she acknowledges, sentimental and traditionary interests; and, although I respect them, and although I wish to see in the Lebanon and Egypt the influence of France fairly and justly maintained, and although her officers and ours in that part of the world — and especially in Egypt — are acting together with confidence and trust, we must remember that our connection with the East is not merely an affair of sentiment and tradition, but that we have urgent and substantial and enormous interests which we must guard and keep. Therefore, when we find that the progress of Russia is a progress which, whatever may be the intentions of Russia, necessarily in that part of the world produces such a state of disorganisation and want of confidence in the Porte, it comes to this — that if we do not interfere in vindication of our own interests, that part of Asia must become the victim of anarchy, and ultimately become part of the possessions of Russia.

Now, my lords, I have ventured to review the chief points connected with the subject on which I wished to address you — namely, what was the policy pursued by us, both at the Congress of Berlin and in the Convention of Constantinople? I am told, indeed, that we have incurred an awful responsibility by the Convention into which we have entered. My lords,

a prudent minister certainly would not recklessly enter into any responsibility; but a minister who is afraid to enter into any responsibility is, to my mind, not a prudent minister. We do not, my lords, wish to enter into any unnecessary responsibility; but there is one responsibility from which we certainly shrink; we shrink from the responsibility of handing to our successors a weakened or a diminished Empire. Our opinion is, that the course we have taken will arrest the great evils which are destroying Asia Minor and the equally rich countries beyond. We see in the present state of affairs the Porte losing its influence over its subjects; we see a certainty, in our opinion, of increasing anarchy, of the dissolution of all those ties which, though feeble, yet still exist and which have kept society together in those countries. We see the inevitable result of such a state of things, and we cannot blame Russia for availing herself of it. But, yielding to Russia what she has obtained, we say to her—'Thus far, and no farther.' Asia is large enough for both of us. There is no reason for these constant wars, or fears of wars, between Russia and England. Before the circumstances which led to the recent disastrous war, when none of those events which we have seen agitating the world had occurred, and when we were speaking in 'another place' of the conduct of Russia in Central Asia, I vindicated that conduct, which I thought was unjustly attacked, and I said then—what I repeat now—there is room enough for Russia and England in Asia.

But the room that we require we must secure. We have, therefore, entered into an alliance—a defensive alliance—with Turkey, to guard her against any further attack from Russia. We believe that the

result of this Convention will be order and tranquillity. And then it will be for Europe — for we ask no exclusive privileges or commercial advantages — it will then be for Europe to assist England in availing ourselves of the wealth which has been so long neglected and undeveloped in regions once so fertile and so favoured. We are told, as I have said before, that we are undertaking great responsibilities. From those responsibilities we do not shrink. We think that, with prudence and discretion, we shall bring about a state of affairs as advantageous for Europe as for ourselves; and in that conviction we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the act which we have recommended is one that leads to trouble and to warfare. No, my lords, I am sure there will be no jealousy between England and France upon this subject. In taking Cyprus the movement is not Mediterranean, it is Indian. We have taken a step there which we think necessary for the maintenance of our Empire and for its preservation in peace.

If that be our first consideration, our next is the development of the country. And upon that subject I am told that it was expected to-night that I should in detail lay before the House the minute system by which all those results which years may bring about are instantly to be acquired. I, my lords, am prepared to do nothing of the kind. We must act with considerable caution. We are acting with a Power, let me remind the House, which is an independent Power — the Sultan — and we can decide nothing but with his consent and sanction. We have been in communication with that Prince — who, I may be allowed to remind the House, has other things to think about, even than Asia Minor; for no man was ever

tried, from his accession to the throne till this moment, so severely as the Sultan has been; but he has invariably during his reign expressed his desire to act with England and to act with Europe, and especially in the better administration and management of his affairs. The time will come — and I hope it is not distant — when my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs may be able to communicate to the House details of these matters, which will be most interesting. But we must protest against being forced into statements on matters of importance, which are necessarily still immature. And we must remember that, formally speaking, even the Treaty of Berlin has not been ratified, and there are many things which cannot even be commenced until the ratification of that treaty has occurred.

My lords, I have now laid before you the general outline of the policy we have pursued, both in the Congress of Berlin and at Constantinople. They are intimately connected with each other, and they must be considered together. I only hope that the House will not misunderstand — and I think the country will not misunderstand — our motives in occupying Cyprus, and in encouraging those intimate relations between ourselves and the Government and the population of Turkey. They are not movements of war; they are operations of peace and civilisation. We have no reason to fear war. Her Majesty has fleets and armies which are second to none. England must have seen with pride the Mediterranean covered with her ships; she must have seen with pride the discipline and devotion which have been shown to her and her Government by all her troops, drawn from every part of her Empire. I leave it to the illustrious

duke in whose presence I speak, to bear witness to the spirit of imperial patriotism which has been exhibited by the troops from India, which he recently reviewed at Malta. But it is not on our fleets and armies, however necessary they may be for the maintenance of our imperial strength, that I alone or mainly depend in that enterprise on which this country is about to enter. It is on what I most highly value—the consciousness that in the .Eastern nations there is confidence in this country, and that, while they know we can enforce our policy, at the same time they know that our Empire is an Empire of liberty, of truth, and of justice.

THE SPEECH FROM THE BALCONY OF 10 DOWNING ST. ON THE DAY OF THE RETURN FROM BERLIN.

THREE cheers for Lord Beaconsfield were demanded and given, then order was prayed for the 'Duke,' and cheers were also demanded for the 'Duke of Cyprus.' For a second time in the day the Prime Minister was visibly affected. He had to wait long for silence, but when an approach to quiet had been obtained Lord Beaconsfield said: 'I can assure you that no recognition of neighbours could be more gratifying to my feelings, than these expressions of the sentiments of those among whom I see many of my oldest and most cherished friends. Lord Salisbury and myself have brought you back peace, but a peace, I hope, with honour, which may satisfy our Sovereign and tend to the welfare of the country. I can now say no more, but express my gratitude and pride in the sympathy which you have shown us at this trying moment.'

SPEECH AT THE CARLTON CLUB BANQUET AFTER THE RETURN FROM BERLIN.

[The Duke of Buccleuch rose and said,—'My Lords and Gentlemen, I have now to propose you a toast, the occasion for which has brought us together this evening and I can only express my regret that the lot has not fallen on some one more eloquent and more capable of doing justice to such a toast. We have met here to welcome home, after arduous and difficult duties, two noble lords, though on this occasion I shall refer only to one who holds the position of Prime Minister of this country. It is not for me on this occasion to enter upon the career of that noble lord, for it is well known as a matter of history. His career and his political character have been before us for upwards of forty years. He has had one great advantage—I will not say at the end of his career, for that, I hope, is still far distant. But his career like that of all statesmen in this country, has been and could not be otherwise than a chequered one, sometimes defeat, oftentimes victory; and now at last I hope he has achieved the greatest victory of his life. A generous foe is as welcome as the constant friend. No one can appreciate more than I do, a noble, open, generous foe. We meet in the field; let us have a fair fight, and he who conquers wins. So it has been with my noble friend. He has had many a hard battle to fight, but on this occasion he has fought with success, carrying with him, I believe, the feeling of the whole country. I propose now the 'Health of Lord Beaconsfield,' and welcome home to him: welcome to him as the greatest conqueror who has vanquished war and brought us back peace.' The toast was drunk with loud and long-continued cheering, the whole company rising *en masse* and the band playing 'Rule Britannia.']

THE Earl of Beaconsfield, K. G., who appeared in the riband of his Order and was received with great cheering, again and again repeated, said,—My Lord Duke and Gentlemen,—I am sure that you will acquit me of affectation if I say that it is not without emotion that I have received this expression of good-will and sympathy. When I look around this chamber I see the faces of some who entered public life with myself, as my noble friend the noble duke has reminded me, more than forty years ago; I see more whose entrance into public life I witnessed when I had myself gained some experience of it, and lastly, I see those who have only recently entered upon public life, and whom it has been my duty and my delight to encourage and to counsel when they entered that public career so characteristic of this country, and which is one of the main securities of our liberty and welfare. My lords and gentlemen, our chairman has referred to my career, like that of all public men in this country, as one of change and vicissitude; but I have been sustained even in the darkest hours of our party, by the conviction that I possessed your confidence, I will say your indulgent confidence, for, in the long course of my public life, that I may have committed many mistakes is too obvious a truth to touch upon; but that you have been indulgent there is no doubt, for I can, I hope I may say proudly, remember that it has been my lot to lead in either House of Parliament this great party for a longer period than

has ever fallen to the lot of any public man in the history of this country.

That I have owed that result to your generous indulgence more than to any personal qualities of my own no man is more sensible than myself; but it is a fact that I may recur to with some degree of proud satisfaction. Our noble chairman has referred to the particular occasion which has made me your guest to-day. I attended that high assembly which has recently dispersed with much reluctance. I yielded to the earnest solicitations of my noble friend near me, my colleague in that great enterprise. He thought that my presence might be of use to him in the vast difficulties he had to encounter; but I must say now, as I ever shall say, that to his lot fell the labouring oar in that great work, and that you are, I will not say equally, but more indebted to him than to myself for the satisfactory result which you kindly recognize. I share the conviction of our noble chairman that it is one which has been received with satisfaction by the country; but I am perfectly aware that that satisfaction is not complete or unanimous, because I know well that before eight-and-forty hours have passed the marshalled hosts of opposition will be prepared to challenge what has been done, and to question the policy we hope we have established.

My lords and gentlemen, as I can no longer raise my voice in that House of Parliament where this contest is to take place, as I sit now in a House where our opponents never unsheathe their swords, a House where although the two chief Plenipotentiaries of the Queen sit they are met only by innuendo and by question, I hope you will permit me, though with ex-

treme brevity, to touch on one or two of the points which in a few hours may engage the interest and attention of Parliament. My lords and gentlemen, it is difficult to describe the exact meaning of the charge which is brought against the Plenipotentiaries of the Queen, as it will be introduced to the House of Commons on Monday. Drawn as it is, it appears at first sight to be only a series of congratulatory regrets. But, my lords and gentlemen, if you penetrate the meaning of this movement it would appear that there are two points in which it is hoped that a successful onset may be made on Her Majesty's Government, and on these two points, and on these alone, I hope with becoming brevity at this moment, perhaps, you will allow me to make one or two remarks.

It is charged against Her Majesty's Government that they have particularly deceived and deserted Greece. Now, my lords and gentlemen, this is a subject which is, I think, capable of simpler treatment than hitherto it has encountered in public discussion. We have given at all times, in public and in private, to the government of Greece and to all who might influence its decisions but one advice — that on no account should they be induced to interfere in those coming disturbances which two years ago threatened Europe and which concluded in a devastating war. And we gave that advice on these grounds, which appear to me incontestable. If, as Greece supposed, and as we thought erroneously supposed, the partition of the Ottoman Empire was at hand, Greece morally, geographically, ethnographically, was sure of receiving a considerable allotment of that partition when it took place. It would be impossible to make a re-settlement of the East of Europe with-

out largely satisfying the claims of Greece; and great as those claims might be, if that were the case, it was surely unwise in Greece to waste its treasure and its blood. If, on the other hand, as Her Majesty's Government believed, the end of this struggle would not be a partition of the Ottoman Empire, but that the wisdom and experience of all the Powers and Governments would come to the conclusion that the existence and strengthening of the Ottoman Government was necessary to the peace of Europe, and without it long and sanguinary and intermitting struggles must inevitably take place, it was equally clear to us that when the settlement occurred all those rebellious, tributary principalities that have lavished their best blood and embarrassed their finances for generations would but necessarily be scurvily treated, and that Greece, even under this alternative, would find that she was wise in following the advice of England and not mixing in a fray so fatal. Well, my lords and gentlemen, has not the event proved the justice and accuracy of that view?

At this moment, though Greece has not interfered, fortunately for herself, though she has not lavished the blood of her citizens and wasted her treasure, under the Treaty of Berlin she has the opportunity of obtaining a greater increase of territory than will be attained by any of the rebellious principalities that have lavished their blood and wasted their resources in this fierce contest. I should like to see that view answered by those who accuse us of misleading Greece. We gave to her the best advice; fortunately for Greece, she followed it, and I will hope that, following it with discretion and moderation, she will not lose the opportunity we have secured for her in

the advantages she may yet reap. I would make one more remark on this subject which will soon so occupy the attention of many of those now present. It has been said that we have misled and deserted Greece because we were the Power which took steps that Greece should be heard before Congress. Why did we do that? Because we have ever expressed our opinion that in the elevation of the Greek race — not merely the subjects of the King of Greece — one of the best chances of improvement of society under the Ottoman rule would be found, and that it was expedient that the rights of the Greek race should be advocated by that portion of it which enjoyed an independent political existence; and all this time, too, let it be recollected that my noble friend was unceasing in his efforts to obtain such a settlement of the claims, or rather, I should say, the desires of Greece with the Porte as would conduce greatly to the advantage of that kingdom. And not without success. The proposition of Lord Salisbury for the rectification of the frontiers of Greece really includes all that moderate and sensible men could desire; and that was the plan that ultimately was adopted by the Congress, and of which Greece might avail herself, if there be prudence and moderation in her councils.

Let me here make one remark — which, indeed, is one that applies to other most interesting portions of this great question — it refers to the personal character of the Sultan. From the first the Sultan of Turkey has expressed his desire to deal with Greece in a spirit of friendliness and conciliation. He has been perfectly aware that in the union of the Turkish and Greek races the only balance could be obtained and secured against the Pan-Slavonic monopoly which was

fast invading the whole of his dominions. Therefore there was every disposition on his part to meet the proposals of the English Government with favour, and he did meet them with favour. Remember the position of that Prince. It is one almost unprecedented. No Prince, probably, that has ever lived has gone through such a series of catastrophes. One of his predecessors commits suicide; his immediate predecessor is subject to a visitation more awful even than suicide. The moment he ascends the throne his Ministers are assassinated. A conspiracy breaks out in his own palace, and then he learns that his kingdom is invaded, his armies, however valiant, are defeated, and that the enemy is at his gates; yet, with all these trials, and during all this period, he has never swerved in the expression, and I believe the feeling, of a desire to deal with Greece in a spirit of friendship.

Well, what happened — what was the last expression of feeling on his part? He is apparently a man whose every impulse is good; however great the difficulties he has to encounter, however evil the influences that may sometimes control him, his impulses are good; and where impulses are good there is always hope. He is not a tyrant — he is not dissolute — he is not a bigot, or corrupt. What was his last decision? When my noble friend, not encouraged, I must say, by Greece, but still continuing his efforts, endeavoured to bring to some practical result this question of the frontiers, the Sultan said that what he was prepared to do he wished should be looked on as an act of grace on his part, and of his sense of the friendliness of Greece in not attacking him during his troubles; but, as a Congress was now

to meet, he should like to hear the result of the wisdom of Congress on the subject. The Congress has now spoken; and though it declared that it did not feel justified in compelling the Sultan to adopt the steps it might think advantageous even for his own interests, the Congress expressed an opinion which I doubt not the Sultan is prepared to consider in the spirit of conciliation he has so often displayed. And this is the moment when a party for factious purposes and a party unhappily not limited to England is egging on Greece to violent courses!

I may perhaps, have touched at too much length on this topic, but the attacks made on Her Majesty's Government are nothing compared with the public mischief that may occur if misconception exists on this point. There is one other point on which I would make a remark, and that is with regard to the Convention of Constantinople of the 4th of June. When I study the catalogue of congratulatory regrets with attention, this appears to be the ground on which a great assault is to be made on the Government. It is said that we have increased, and dangerously increased, our responsibilities as a nation by that Convention. In the first place I deny that we have increased our responsibilities by that Convention. I maintain that by that Convention we have lessened our responsibilities. Suppose now for example, the settlement of Europe had not included the Convention of Constantinople and the occupation of the isle of Cyprus; suppose it had been limited to the mere Treaty of Berlin, what under all probable circumstances might then have occurred? In ten, fifteen, it might be in twenty years, the power and resources of Russia having revived, some quarrel would again have oc-

curred, Bulgarian or otherwise, and in all probability the armies of Russia would have been assailing the Ottoman dominions both in Europe and Asia, and enveloping and enclosing the city of Constantinople and its all-powerful position.

Well, what would be the probable conduct, under these circumstances, of the Government of this country, whoever the ministers might be,—whatever party might be in power? I fear there might be a hesitation for a time—a want of decision—a want of firmness; but no one doubts that ultimately England would have said, 'This will never do; we must prevent the conquest of Asia Minor; we must interfere in this matter and arrest the course of Russia.' No one, I am sure, in this country who impartially considers this question, can for a moment doubt what under any circumstances would have been the course of this country. Well, then, that being the case, I say it is extremely important that this country should take a step beforehand which should indicate what the policy of England would be; that you should not have your ministers meeting in a council-chamber, hesitating, and doubting, and considering contingencies, and then acting at last, but acting perhaps, too late. I say therefore, that the responsibilities of this country have not been increased, the responsibilities have already existed, though I, for one, would never shrink from increasing the responsibilities of this country, if they are responsibilities which ought to be undertaken. The responsibilities of the country are practically diminished by the course we have taken. My lords and gentlemen, one of the results of my attending the Congress of Berlin, has been to prove what I always suspected to be an

absolute fact, that neither the Crimean war nor this horrible devastating war which has just terminated would have taken place if England had spoken with the necessary firmness. Russia has complaints to make against this country, that neither in the case of the Crimean war, nor on this occasion — and I don't shrink from my share of the responsibility in this matter — was the voice of England so clear and decided as to exercise a due share in the guidance of European opinion. Well, gentlemen, suppose my noble friend and myself had come back with the Treaty of Berlin and had not taken the step which is to be questioned within the next eight-and-forty hours, could we with any self respect have met our countrymen when they asked, What securities have you made for the peace of Europe — how far have you diminished the chance of perpetually recurring war on this question of the East by the Treaty of Berlin? Why, they could say, all we have gained by the Treaty of Berlin is probably the peace of a few years and at the end of that time the same phenomenon will arise, and the Ministers of England must patch up the affair as well as they can.

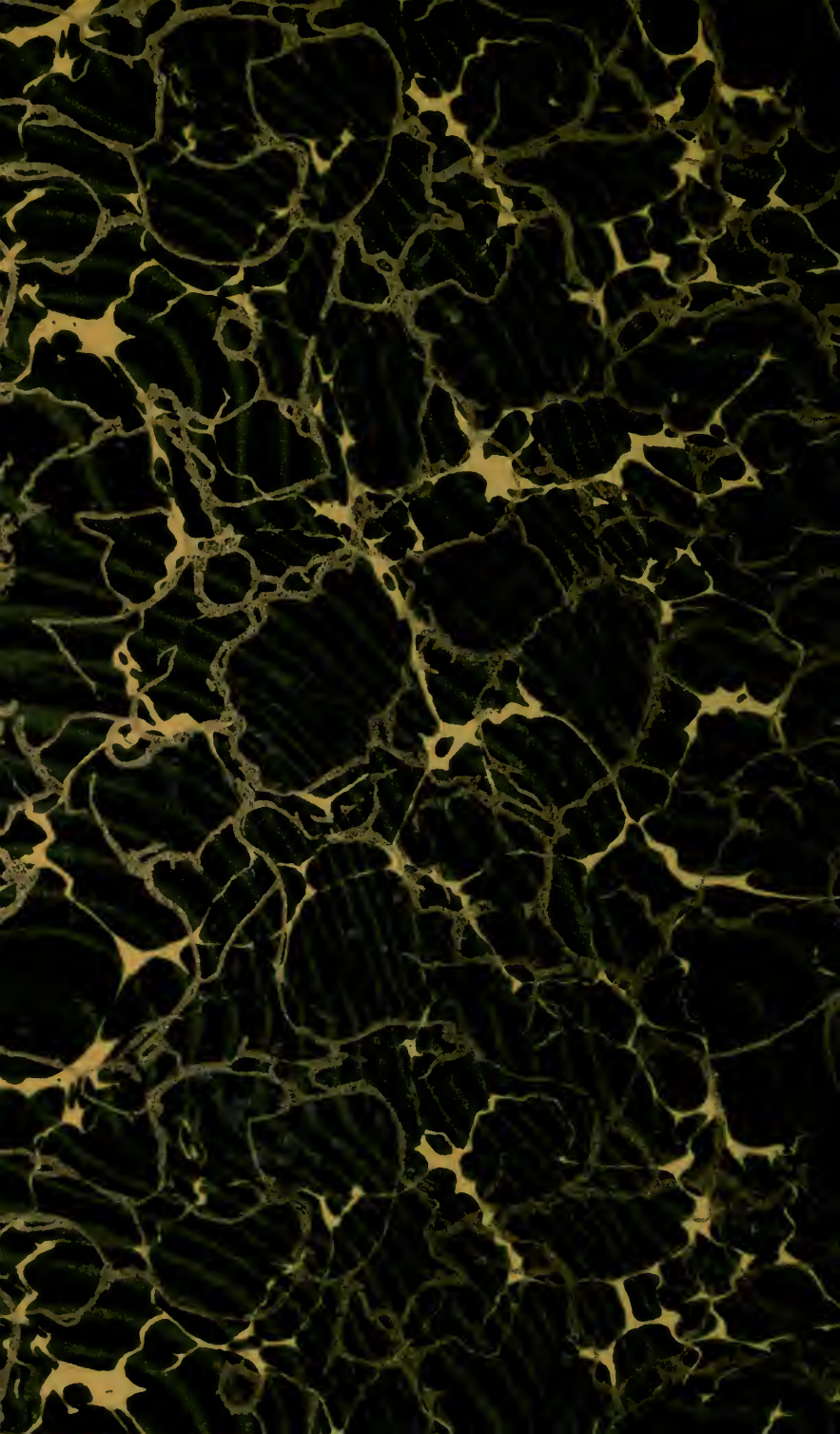
That was not the idea of public duty entertained by my noble friend and myself. We thought the time had come when we should take steps which would produce some order out of the anarchy and chaos that had so long prevailed. We asked ourselves, Was it absolutely a necessity that the fairest provinces of the world should be the most devastated and the most ill-used, and for this reason, that there is no security for life or property so long as that country is in perpetual fear of invasion and aggression? It was under these circumstances that we recommended the

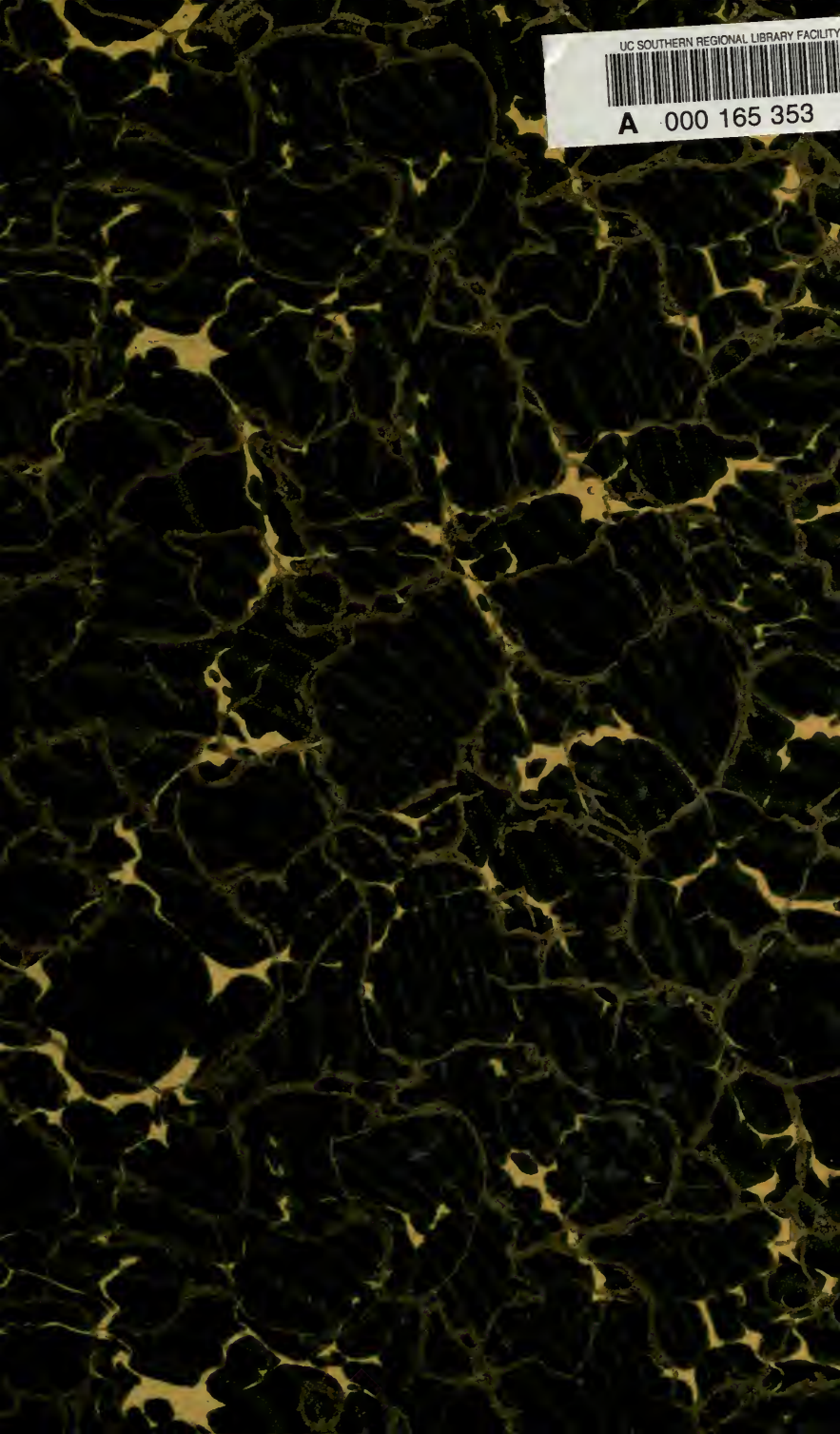
course we have taken, and I believe that the consequences of that policy will tend to and even secure peace and order in a portion of the globe which hitherto has seldom been blessed with these celestial visitants. I hold that we have laid the foundation of a state of affairs which may open a new continent to the civilisation of Europe, and that the welfare of the world and the wealth of the world may be increased by availing ourselves of that tranquillity and order which the more intimate connection of England with that country will now produce. But I am sorry to say that, though we taxed our brains and our thought to establish a policy which might be beneficial to the country, we have not satisfied those who are our critics. I was astonished to learn that the convention of the 4th of June has been described as an 'insane' Convention. It is a strong epithet. I do not myself pretend to be as competent a judge of insanity as my right Hon. opponent. I will not say to the right Hon. gentleman 'Naviget Anticyram,' but I would put this issue to an English jury — which do you believe most likely to enter into an insane Convention, a body of English gentlemen honoured by the favour of their Sovereign and the confidence of their fellow subjects, managing your affairs for five years, I hope with prudence, and not altogether without success, or a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign an opponent and to glorify himself?

My lords and gentlemen, I leave the decision upon that Convention to the Parliament and to the people

of England. I believe that in that policy are deeply laid the seeds of future welfare not merely to England but to Europe and to Asia; and confident that the policy we have recommended is one that will be supported by the country, I and those that act with me can endure those attacks.

My lords and gentlemen, let me thank you once more for the manner in which you have welcomed me to-day. These are the rewards of public life that never pall—the sympathy of those who have known you long, who have worked with you long, who have the same opinions upon the policy that ought to be pursued in this great and ancient Empire. These are sentiments which no language can sufficiently appreciate—which are a consolation under all circumstances and the highest reward that a public man can attain. The generous feeling that has prompted you to welcome my colleague and myself on our return to England will inspire and strengthen our efforts to serve our country; and it is not merely that in this welcome you encourage those who are doing their best for what they conceive to be the public interests, but you tell to Europe also that England is a grateful country, and knows how to appreciate the efforts of those of her public servants who are resolved to maintain to their utmost the empire of Great Britain.

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